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INSTRUCTIONS
ON
THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN
THE DIVINE

INSTRUCTIONS

ON

THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN
THE DIVINE

*BEING AN ATTEMPT TO MAKE THIS BOOK MORE
INTELLIGIBLE TO THE ORDINARY READER
AND SO TO ENCOURAGE THE
STUDY OF IT*

BY

✓
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To

MY FIRST COLLEAGUE AND FAITHFUL FRIEND

HENRY HORACE PEREIRA, M.A.,

VICAR AND RURAL DEAN OF CROYDON, AND

HONORARY CANON OF CANTERBURY;

AND TO

CHARLES EDWARD STEWARD, M.A.,

FORMERLY VICAR OF ST. PETER'S, SOUTHAMPTON,

WHO,

THOUGH GONE TO HIS REST, LIVES WITH US STILL, AND WHOSE

NAME AND MEMORY, TEACHING AND EXAMPLE,

ARE DEAR TO US BOTH,

I DEDICATE,

WITH VERY DEEP AFFECTION,

THESE PAGES.

PREFACE

SOME time ago I was much struck by a suggestion made by Professor Milligan, in his valuable "Lectures on the Apocalypse," to the effect that the Revelation of St. John might be regarded as an extended account of Our Lord's discourses on the four last things.

I had long felt that the book was misunderstood, that it was one *for all time*, and that its glorious revelation could not be *satisfied* by any theory which *limited* it to mere history, to the dynasties of the world, or to the delineations of papacy.

I determined, with these two thoughts always before me, to try to work out the subject in such a way as might be helpful to others. These "Instructions" are the result. They pretend to no deep scholarship. They were prepared amidst the manifold interruptions to which the life of a busy parish priest is subject. They were, moreover, prepared for delivery on fixed dates, and thus I am conscious of an unevenness in them, as I was able to devote far less time to some than to others. They have, however, afforded much interest to my own people, at whose request I venture to publish them. My hope is that, even though they may be found wanting in many ways, they may pave the way to a further study and

development of this wonderful book, at the hands of others more capable than I.

I have had three volumes constantly open before me, viz. Professor Milligan's "Introduction to the Revelation of St. John," in Professor Schaff's "Commentary on the New Testament;" "The Speaker's Commentary," containing the valuable work of Archdeacon Lee; and the commentary compiled by my brother-in-law, Canon Fausset, of York. These I have used as occasion served, and they have been of great assistance to me, though I think I may say that I have slavishly adhered to none of them.

In working out the subject of "The First Resurrection," I found much help in certain pamphlets by Canon Fausset, and in a volume entitled "The Gospel of the Future," written by a friend of mine under the *nom de plume* of "A Parish Priest." My most cordial acknowledgments are also due to my dear friend Mr. G. H. Cuming Butler, B.A., of Trinity College, Cambridge, whose scholarly assistance has been of the greatest value to me in the preparation of the Introduction, and the revision for the press.

If the Instructions afford any one an insight into a book, which has been hitherto practically closed to many, even to those who are devout readers of the rest of God's Word; if the untold comfort, encouragement, and hope which it is calculated to afford, are brought home to the heart, and into the life of only one tried, and struggling, and tempted soul, then I am more than repaid. May all the glory be God's!

C. S.

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INTRODUCTION

Adapted from EBERHARD VISCHER, "Die Offenbarung Johannis,"
u.s.w., mit einen Nachwort von Adolf Harnick. (Leipzig, 1886.)

THERE was a time in the history of the Jewish race, when its religion seemed about to breathe its last. Greek influence, æsthetic, poetic, and attractive, seemed to be destroying one by one the old Oriental faiths. The Jewish aristocracy, unfaithful to Him who had done so great things for them, "marvellous things in the land of Egypt, and fearful things by the Red Sea," had tacitly yielded to, if they had not actually connived at, the abolition, by the Syrian Government, of the daily sacrifice in the Temple at Jerusalem, and the erection there of an altar to Olympian Zeus.

It was at this time, when the fatal crisis in the history of the nation seemed to have been reached, that, in God's mercy, things took a new turn. Antiochus Epiphanes, instead of easily crushing his insignificant foes, and destroying the last remnant of the national organization, raised up heroes against himself, who, helped by the civil wars of his successors, at length achieved the deliverance of their people, insomuch that from the date B.C. 143, when their independence was formally acknowledged, that which might almost be called the new birth of the nation, took place. "The yoke of the heathen was taken away from Israel in the hundred and seventieth year" (*i.e.* of the Seleucidæ). "Then the people of Israel began to write in their instruments and contracts," etc. (1 Macc. xiii. 41, *et seq.*). Persecution had had, as it often has, the very opposite effect which its promoters desired; it had brought unity

to the divided race, and had rekindled their zeal for the faith of their fathers.

In this great movement, the Book of Daniel, whoever its author, and whatever its date, undoubtedly played a great part. It promised speedy deliverance ; it specifically announced that, between the time of the abolition of the daily sacrifice and the restoration, there should be a period of tribulation, strictly limited in its duration, and it assured the Jews that the presence of the God of Israel was still vouchsafed to them. This inspired them, on the one hand towards further victories, and comforted them on the other, under fresh calamities.

It is to the constantly recurring crises of this date that we owe, at all events in a large degree, certain works which are called Apocalypses, all tending, something like the Book of Daniel, to encourage their readers by assurances of the final overthrow of evil, and the triumph of the right. These Apocalypses are known by the names of Enoch (appealed to by St. Jude), Moses, Elijah, Baruch, etc. These persons are represented as predicting the course of the world down to the time of the real authors, who remain altogether unknown to us. In other words, past occurrences are related in the form of prophecies, and thereupon follow some announcements as to the course of strictly future events.

There can be no doubt that these Apocalypses prepared the way for Christianity, for they were the means of keeping alive, not only the hope of the coming Messiah, but the expectation of His near approach, which, the Jews hoped, was to bring to them the restoration of their kingdom, and many other blessings.

It is suggested that the book, which we now know as the Apocalypse, or The Revelation of St. John the Divine, owes its origin to these previous Apocalypses. There is nothing that need alarm us for a moment in this view, or rob the book either of its canonicity or its inspiration. St. John was a Jew ; he, the apostle of love, would love his people and nation with the same ardent affection which characterized St. Paul, and, once convinced himself, as he absolutely was, of the true Messiahship of JESUS of Nazareth, he would do all he could to lead his fellow-countrymen, as well as his fellow-Christians, to the firm faith and bright hopes which he himself had so clearly

before him. With St. Paul he would say, "My heart's desire and prayer to GOD for Israel is that they might be saved." Hardly anything, then, seems more natural than that, falling into the spirit of the age, and familiar from his childhood with these Jewish Apocalypses, he should model his own upon them, and even in some cases incorporate them into his book, while he put a *Christian* interpretation upon that which, up to his time, had been looked upon only as Jewish. He would do this emphatically under the guidance and teaching of GOD the HOLY SPIRIT: "I was *in the Spirit* on the LORD's Day." Let us put ourselves in his place; imagine a book, or a series of books, with which we have long been familiar, setting forth the deliverance of our nation by some great hero: imagine these finding their fulfilment in the person of one known to, and loved by us; is it not patent that our love for these books would be greatly enhanced? And as our love introduced into their pages the name and the character of the being who responded to their utterances, would not that love be extended to the books themselves? So it is an incontrovertible fact that the purely Jewish Apocalypses referred to, have been handed down to us not by Jews, but by Christians! And the Christians not only handed down these Jewish writings, but actually made additions to them, for the edification of their Christian readers, following, in fact, the lines of all previous Apocalyptic writers, of bringing their subject up to date. These Christianized Jewish writings possessed for a long time an almost Canonical importance, but when the formation of the Canon rejected a certain number of them, and raised the standard higher, this Apocalypse of St. John alone succeeded in remaining firmly established in the Canon of the Latin Church, and of continual use and importance.

As to the canonicity of the book, we accept it on the authority of the Church; *we cannot go beyond our parentage*.¹

It is, moreover, to be noted that these Jewish Apocalypses were, with hardly an exception, written in times of need and trouble. Pious men saw, in the days of oppression, the forerunner of the GODLY judgment, upon which

¹ Those who desire to see on what grounds the Church has decided to treat the Apocalypse as Canonical, will find the whole subject exhaustively dealt with in Dr. Westcott's "Canon of the New Testament."

the Judge Himself would speedily follow, and so prophesied of the advent of the Messiah. Such prophecies were necessarily indefinite as to time of fulfilment, it being patent that, if the time prophesied had arrived without bringing fulfilment, their declarations lost much in both meaning and importance. Constant revision thus became necessary, and when the Christian era commenced such revision naturally took Christian shape.

This seems to be very plainly shown in this Apocalypse. It is full of distinctly *Jewish* ideas, of hopes for the *Jewish* nation as a chosen body, of predictions of their restoration as a nation, and yet its author has plainly accepted the new idea of Christianity, for he clothes his expressions in a manner which is in accordance with Christian ideas. It will, in short, hardly be denied that the substratum of the whole book, with the exception of a very few parts, is Jewish.

But that the whole book is intended to remain Jewish is out of the question. Like the Church itself, it has Jewish foundations, on which has been laid, as a superstructure, that all-embracing building set forth in the New Testament, where the distinctions of Jew and Gentile, barbarian, Scythian, bond, and free, are done away. The Apocalypse, then, Jewish in its origin, has been changed, by revision, into a Christian book, for the use of all.

We have seen that Apocalypses were a form of literature which found much favour among the Jews, and it is important to add that writings of this description, which were formerly held to be entirely Christian, have been discovered, on closer search, to be Christian revisions of Jewish writings. The "Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs," *e.g.*, has been made the subject of a very important argument in this direction. Schnapp, in his inquiry into it, shows that the reason for its want of harmony, and the variety of opinions respecting it, is due to the fact that it has not preserved its unity, but contains interpolations; he treats it as a Jewish book compiled by a Christian author; but it is argued with much force, that if the way to clear the contradictions in this testament is by the assumption of a Jewish groundwork, which has been revised by a Christian, there is much authority for explaining the difficulties of St. John's Apocalypse in a similar way. It is urged that the theme is handled, in the majority of cases,

like that of the Jewish Apocalypses, that from these are borrowed the larger portion of the ideas with which he clothes his thoughts ; and that there is little reason, therefore, to shrink from the assumption that the author has used some then-existing writing or writings as his ground-work, and has rewritten them from a Christian standpoint. Such reproduction, selection, and adaptation were the habit of the time, and they do not in the least degree invalidate or lower the power and value of the book. Be it ever so Jewish in origin, it stands unaltered as "The Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, which GOD gave unto HIM, to show unto HIS servants things which must shortly come to pass ; and HE sent and signified it by HIS messenger unto HIS servant John." That fact remains absolutely unimpaired by this hypothesis. Indeed, a Jewish Christian would, as a Jew, have strongly held, *e.g.*, to the inspiration of the Book of Enoch, treasuring all that was edifying to himself in it, and on becoming a Christian, he would not have dreamed of rejecting the doctrine of its inspiration, just because he was able to hold it in the clearer light which his Christian faith threw upon it. The Christian Church has taken over many a priceless heritage from the Jewish ; these Apocalypses are a portion of such inheritance. The early Christians certainly felt themselves to be the lawful masters of this inherited treasure, holding it in trust for CHRIST ; they treasured the writings and read them industriously. Who can wonder if, with the new hopes which rose in their breasts when they "found the Messias," these old books which prophesied of HIS Glory and of HIS Return, should be full to the brim with new meaning to them, just as the Old Testament is a new book to us when we read into it the blessed work, both past and present, of our Great HIGH PRIEST ?

We may note, in support of this view—

(a) The fact that the language is very Hebraistic. Though we must not lay too much stress upon this argument, in the face of the fact that all Hellenistic Greek more or less exhibits this characteristic, yet it would be hardly too much to say that the Hebraisms of this Apocalypse are both more numerous and more pronounced than those of any other book in the New Testament, or, indeed, of any writing admittedly penned originally in Hellenistic Greek.

(b) There are some passages which it seems hardly possible for a Christian writer to have been the original author of. Chapters xi. and xii., *e.g.*, seem to be explicable only on the theory alluded to above. They furnish an exact historical picture, and all difficulties disappear if we admit their origin from a Jewish pen and their Christian adaptation. The outer court is not to be measured, for it is to be given to the Gentiles, and to be, for a definite period, trodden under foot. It is certainly implied in verse 1 of the former chapter, that the Temple, the Altar, and "they that worship therein," are to be spared this desecration. "They that worship therein" can hardly be other than the Jews, holding fast to the temple worship. Yet, how could a Christian Jew, especially one like St. John, who had heard HIS LORD's clearest prediction, have any hope that the literal Temple was to be spared? "And Jesus went out, and departed from the Temple; and His disciples came to HIM, for to show HIM the buildings of the Temple. And JESUS said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (St. Matt. xxiv. 1, 2). A Jew, we can well understand, could have held the destruction of the Temple, at a time prior to the coming of the Messiah, as impossible; indeed, such a belief was seen to be both strong and widespread during the time of the Roman invasion; but a Christian, and particularly one of our LORD's disciples, could not have had any such hope of the material building. His whole being, nevertheless, might go out in sure and certain hope of the preservation of that higher and better temple of the New Testament Church, of which the Jewish sanctuary was a speaking type.

The events which follow do not seem to fit in at all well in a Christian writing, and the scenes depicted do not certainly *originate* from a Christian source. The power attributed to the two witnesses had been previously invested in Moses and Elijah. With the Jews, on the other hand, there was a widespread idea that the advent of the Messiah would be preceded by that of certain forerunners. We know that the coming of "a prophet like unto Moses" was fulfilled in our Blessed LORD JESUS CHRIST (Acts iii. 19-26), and that of Elias in the person of St. John the Baptist (St. Matt. xi. 7-15); but the Jews, building

their hopes upon Deut. xviii. 15, and Mal. iv. 5, 6 respectively, looked forward to the return of Moses and Elijah themselves.

Further evidence in the same direction seems to be furnished in the remainder of the chapter. The mention of the Name "CHRIST" is no argument against us, as such an expression is found in Jewish writings, *e.g.* in the familiar passage in Psa. ii., "against the LORD, and against HIS CHRIST." But in verse 18 there seems clear proof of primary Jewish authorship. It sets forth that a time is coming when GOD will reward three classes of the faithful—HIS prophets, HIS saints, and "them that fear HIS Name." From a Christian point of view, this is almost tautology as regards the latter two, but it is not so if it be looked at from a Jewish aspect. "Them that fear HIS Name," was a customary designation for the heathen who followed the Jewish community in the time of the dispersion, who frequented the synagogue, and adopted the Jewish forms of worship, though only the main points of the ceremonial law.

Ch. xii. supplies interesting corroboration of this view. It is, in fact, only possible to understand this part of the vision rightly when one recognizes what place it holds in the design of the writer, whether the idea is that of a Christian who sees the "mystery of GOD" consummated in JESUS CHRIST, or whether it is that of a Jew still looking for a future Messiah. The opening passage is clearly allied with ch. xi. 15; and the phenomena of verse 19 show the greatness of the occurrence which is about to take place, which is, from *either point of view*, the birth of the Messiah. Is it *primarily* the birth of JESUS CHRIST? If so, we are face to face with the almost insuperable difficulty that the author, dealing confessedly with "things which are to come to pass hereafter," makes an exception in this one particular case. But it seems almost absurd that he should disclose, in the very centre of a history of the future, a *past* fact universally known to believers! Another difficulty arises in the "child being caught up to GOD, and to HIS Throne." It is difficult to apply this primarily to the Ascension, for it seems patent that a very short space of time elapses between the birth of the child and his "rapture" into heaven. Notice, moreover, that there is no mention of the life of JESUS

CHRIST upon earth, nor of HIS Work, nor of HIS Death. He is taken *as a child* to God, and there remains (at all events till ch. xix. 11). Certainly a Christian writer of the Apocalypse could have shown much more powerfully the enmity and the impotence of the red dragon, by the crucifixion and the events which followed it, when the devil sought to overcome THE LORD, and was himself put to shame. Yet the sacred facts upon which the early Christians laid most stress, the Circumcision, the Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation, the Agony and Bloody Sweat, the Cross and Passion, the precious Death and Burial, are here passed over and ignored. If, then, we are to hold this passage as *primarily* of Christian origin, we seem to be in a fatal dilemma. But all difficulty is done away if we see here a remnant of a Jewish Apocalypse. Nothing could be more natural than for a Jew to look upon the birth of THE MESSIAH as future. The Old Testament, and other existing writings, are full of such hopes. Though they meet us in varied forms, there is almost general agreement upon other points. On the ground of the Old Testament prophecies, it was universally recognized that the Messiah should be of the race of David; that HE would be born on earth; that HIS Advent would be sudden, and that at any moment HE might step out of the obscurity in which HE was concealed, and appear as a powerful ruler. The Talmud has a passage which relates that the Messiah was born in Bethlehem on the day that the Temple was destroyed, but a short time after he was carried away from his mother in a whirlwind! The appearance of the Messiah in many other passages in the Apocalypse harmonizes with Jewish rather than Christian ideas (see, *e.g.*, ch. xix.).

We believe then that a Christian writer has taken these previously existing passages and clothed them with a Christian garb; and, under the teaching and guidance of GOD the HOLY GHOST, has given to us a book to help us, collectively and individually, in every hour when we feel the length of our heavenward journey, the difficulties of the way, or the horrors of our great battle "against sin, the world, and the devil."

This seems to me to do away with much of the difficulty raised by those modern critics, who, judging from internal evidence, believe the book to have been composed before

the year A.D. 70, whereas, according to the tradition of the early Christian Church, it dates from about A.D. 95, when Domitian was emperor. The theory that the Apocalypse is the work of a Christian who has built upon Jewish materials, brings these two views rather into harmony than opposition; for those passages which seem to point to the earlier date are all Jewish in character, and may well have been written long before the destruction of Jerusalem, while the Christian compiler lived several years later.

"LIGHT shows many a link, where the darkness of a less instructed eye can only see confusion. And the tale which to some is but an endless and entangled skein, to those who possess the clue is full of unity as well as the deepest wisdom."—JUKES, "Types of Genesis," p. 57.

INSTRUCTION I.

CHAPTER i. 1-3.

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his Angel unto his servant John,

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God ¹gave him to shew unto his ²servants, *even* the things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified ³*it* by his angel unto his servant John;

2 who bare witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even* of all things

3 that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

¹ Or, gave unto him, to shew unto his servants the things, &c.

² Gr. bond-servants: and so throughout this book.

³ Or, them.

THIS lecture must, of necessity, be to a great extent introductory. We are approaching the study of a book which is supposed to present insuperable difficulties to the ordinary reader, with the result that it is neglected by many, or passed over as unintelligible, though in its opening sentences a special promise is attached to "him who reads, and to those who hear the words of this prophecy." The Church, moreover, has placed it among the Canonical books of the New Testament, and this alone is quite sufficient to remove any justification from those who neglect its study on account of the difficulties which it presents. That it *is* difficult no one can deny, but it is not in accordance with our English character to shrink from difficulties, and I believe that a careful and prayerful study of it will so far simplify its contents that, even if some of our details may be incorrect, the great and broad outline of "the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him to shew unto His servants," will be sufficiently clear to warn, to strengthen, and to encourage all who bring to its consideration an open mind.

I propose, then, that we shall approach the book with an open mind, avoiding that spirit in which the supporters of opposing views speak of each other, too often, with contempt ; coming to it as to a new book, the study of which is sure to bring a blessing, if only it be undertaken in the right spirit, and according to the mind of Christ. We must put aside all prejudice, and come in the spirit so beautifully recommended by Professor Milligan, "in humility, in calmness, in openness to conviction, in charity, and in singleness of desire to ascertain the truth." "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth : for He shall not speak of Himself ; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak : and He will show you things to come" (St. John xvi. 13).

I need hardly remind you that there are many interpretations of this book ; but as it is altogether beyond my scope to criticize these, I need only say that, broadly speaking, those with which we need to deal fall into two classes : (1) those which look upon it as entirely historical, as a progressive history of the Church from its earliest days to its entrance into glory ; (2) those which regard it altogether in the light of the future. I humbly suggest that, however much of truth there may be in either of these views, neither of them absolutely *fills up the picture*.

The following objection to the former seems to me almost insuperable, "that the Apocalypse would have been useless, alike to those for whom it was originally written, and to the mass of humble Christians in all ages ;" if the book be useless, its promises are meaningless, or, at the least, uncertain in their application. The futurist view has much of truth in it, for the Apocalypse does deal with the second coming of our blessed Lord ; but it does not do so in such a way as to pass over things, present alike to the author and to us. We will treat the book, then, by God's help, as one for all time, as the "travelling manual of the Church," as Auberlen calls it. We shall thus find it suited to every reader and every hearer in every age. It deals more with great principles than with special incidents—principles which govern the history both of the world and of the Church, showing to us our Lord Jesus in His glory, watching over His own, ordering all things, and moulding them into His own purpose. Thus the book becomes a source of the greatest encouragement and of the holiest joy to the faithful,

the struggling, the tempted, the puzzled, and the harassed of *to-day*. It brings to them many a beatitude to help them on their way, and is thus a revelation infinitely better than that of the history of Europe, the accoutrements of the Turkish soldiers, the French Revolution, the fortunes of Napoleon, the destinies of earthly kingdoms, or a portrait of the papacy.

There is another deeply interesting suggestion. In the synoptic Gospels, in answer to the question of the disciples, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" our Lord gives a revelation of the last things in graphic and mystical language. St. John, in his holy Gospel, gives us not a word of this, though we are led to believe that he had, more than any of his colleagues, an insight into the mind of Christ. Professor Milligan suggests that we have in the Apocalypse an enlarged edition of this same revelation, written by St. John in the quiet and solitude of the island of Patmos, after the other disciples had gone, the Holy Spirit specially guiding him, and filling in the details of the picture. We shall see, most interestingly, as we proceed, that the parallels between this book and the account of the three synoptists of the discourse on the last things are so numerous, as amply to justify such an interesting and helpful conjecture.

The holy *Gospel* of St. John thus furnishes us with a key with which to unlock the mystery of the Apocalypse. As the former work is not a synoptic record of our Lord's life from His holy nativity to His glorious resurrection, but rather a series of signs by which He unveils to His Church the character of the Father, the work of the Holy Spirit, and His own union, in the ever Blessed Trinity, in the salvation and sanctification of mankind, so in this book He sets before us, in another series of signs, the life and experiences of His Church. "Union with Christ, not only in inward spirit but in outward fortune, is the abiding mark of the Church, one of the deepest and most essential characteristics of her life; the Church must tread the same path as her Redeemer trod; she must drink the same cup and be baptized with the same baptism."¹

Thus we shall have clearly set forth (1) the Church's conflicts and our own individual ones, as members of Her;

¹ See Professor Milligan's "Lectures on the Apocalypse," p. 61.

(2) the preservation of the faithful—many things may harass and try, but nothing can really injure or destroy them; (3) the final triumph of the Church and Her members, especially as connected with the manifestation of Her glorified Lord in His second advent, in His millennial reign, and in the future “perfect consummation and bliss in His eternal and everlasting glory.”

To this revelation, therefore, we approach, believing that there is an especial blessing in store for us because such has been promised by God, and that thus God Himself will make everything necessary quite intelligible, if we come to the subject, as by God’s help we will, in humble dependence upon the guiding and teaching of the Holy Spirit. As this is the “revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to Him to shew unto His servants,” we may appropriately read, apply to ourselves, and turn into a prayer this passage, “Now have they known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of Thee. For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest unto Me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me (St. John xvii. 7, 8).

The title of the book might rightly be, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ according to St. John the Divine.”

The preface we may divide into three parts: (1) the person is set before us from whom the revelation came; (2) the fidelity of him to whom it was entrusted; (3) the blessing attached to the faithful reading and hearing of the prophecy, and the keeping of the things written therein.

As in St. John’s holy Gospel, so here, the Father is set before us as the fountain-head of all blessing; to His blessed Son He has “given power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as the Father has given Him.” Of these He thus speaks, “I know My own, and My own know Me, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father.” And this is His High-Priestly prayer, “That they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us: that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me” (St. John x. 14, 15; and xvii. 21, R.V.).

This, then, is the first thought: The Father has given this revelation, this “unveiling,” to His blessed Son, who,

in turn, has bestowed it upon His Church. It is all clear to God ; His Son unveils it that it may be clear also to His servants, of whom St. John is one.

The Revelation, like the holy Gospel, is to be a series of *signs*, and therefore the word "*signified*" is used. St. John is the witness, not the "faithful Witness" of v. 5, which is Jesus Christ Himself, but yet faithful in his turn, not teaching us himself, but giving evidence to us of that which the "faithful Witness" first revealed to him. He becomes thus a pattern to teachers and preachers. It is better to testify than to argue. "O come hither, and hearken, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul" (Ps. lxvi. 14, Prayer-book version). St. Paul may argue with rude barbarian or cultured philosopher ; the majority of us shall do far more for God by following St. John, and simply bearing testimony, whenever we are dealing with things which can only be revealed by God Himself. "The natural" (or rather psychical) "man receiveth not the things of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things" (1 Cor. ii. 14, 15).

The promise in v. 3 is peculiarly suited to instructions of this sort. The thought is that of reading aloud in church to those who listen. *He* that readeth, *they* that hear. But for both the mere reading and hearing are not enough. The trust is put into our hands, so to speak, by this process ; our responsibility is that we keep it. "The time is at hand ;" hardly so (though a thousand years are with the Lord as one day), if all the book is, after the lapse of eighteen hundred years, still future ; but most surely and powerfully so, if the great *principles* of the book are applicable to *every* page of the Church's history ; "at hand" when it was penned ; "at hand" ever since then till now ; and "at hand" now in this present day of grace, mercies, and opportunities ; "at hand" to warn and to bless, to fill us with a peace and joy far greater than the world's rewards, as we think of the protecting care of Him who is alive for evermore ; "at hand" to be a stimulus to our faith, and to our hope, and to our "patient waiting for Christ,"

INSTRUCTION II.

CHAPTER i. 4-9.

<p>* Ex. 3. 14.</p>	<p>4 John to the seven Churches in Asia, Grace <i>be</i> unto you, and peace, from him *which is, and which was, and which is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before his throne :</p>	<p>4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia : Grace to you and peace, from him which is and which was and ¹which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his</p>	<p>¹ Or, <i>which cometh.</i></p>
<p>* 1 Cor. 15. 20. Col. 1. 18. * Heb. 9. 14.</p>	<p>5 And from Jesus Christ, <i>who is</i> the faithful witness, and the *first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth : unto him that loved us, *and washed us from our sins in his own blood,</p>	<p>5 throne; and from Jesus Christ, <i>who is</i> the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and ²loosed us from our sins ³by his blood ;</p>	<p>² Many authorities, some ancient, read <i>washed.</i></p>
<p>* 1 Pet. 2. 5.</p>	<p>6 And hath *made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father : to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.</p>	<p>6 and he made us <i>to be</i> a kingdom, <i>to be</i> priests unto his God and Father; to him <i>be</i> the glory and the dominion ⁴for ever and ever. Amen.</p>	<p>³ Gr. <i>in.</i></p>
<p>* Matt. 24. 30.</p>	<p>7 *Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him : and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him : ever so. Amen.</p>	<p>7 and ever. Amen. Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they which pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen.</p>	<p>⁴ Gr. <i>unto the ages of the ages.</i> Many ancient authorities omit <i>of the ages.</i></p>
	<p>8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.</p>	<p>8 I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith ⁵the Lord God, ⁶which is and which was and ¹which is to come, the Almighty.</p>	<p>⁵ Or, <i>the Lord, the God.</i></p>
	<p>9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the Isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.</p>	<p>9 I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience <i>which are</i> in Jesus, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.</p>	<p>⁶ Or, <i>he which.</i></p>

WE shall make but little advance in the comprehension of the Apocalypse, unless we remember that the language used is almost entirely figurative, and requires a proper key to

enable us to understand it. In these figures, numbers play a part by no means unimportant. Thus "three" is the Divine number, and is always connected with God—the Trinity in Unity—or with His attributes. "Four" is the world number, just as we speak of the "four corners of the earth," "the four points of the compass." And next we have the sum of these two in the number "seven," dealing with things which unite the two thoughts—God and the world. "Seven" enters into the composition of the Revelation many times—there are seven spirits, seven Churches, seven epistles to the Churches, seven golden candlesticks, seven stars in the hand of Him who is like unto a Son of man, seven lamps of fire burning before the throne; the lamb has seven horns and seven eyes; there are seven seals, seven angels, seven thunders, seven heads of the great dragon, seven diadems on his head; a beast out of the sea has seven heads; there are seven angels with trumpets, seven last plagues, seven vials (or rather bowls), seven mountains, seven kings, seven attributes of praise, both in ch. v. 12 and ch. vii. 12; there are seven features also in the description of the locusts in ch. ix. 7–10. So the seven epistles seemed to be based each upon a sevenfold plan, for each contains seven particulars.

(*a*) The superscription to the Church addressed; (*b*) the special aspect of the Saviour; (*c*) a statement of the spiritual condition of the Church; (*d*) commendation or censure; (*e*) exhortation; (*f*) promise to him that overcometh; (*g*) the call to hear.¹ The numbers "three" and "four" play a similar all-important part later on. Seven, therefore, is not merely numerical; it represents the covenant between God and man, between heaven and earth. It is an unity with complex characteristics—"four" and "three." The message with which it deals is addressed to the whole of the Catholic Church. Here begins our personal comfort, warning, and encouragement; in the battle of life, in its sorrows, trials, and joys. The Apocalypse is addressed to ourselves as well as to the ages gone by; therefore, not only to the seven Churches in Asia, but to the whole Church, and to each member personally. This is, I think, the general idea of the book.

The Greek of v. 4 is very beautiful. The name of God is, grammatically, indeclinable.

¹ Professor Milligan, "Lectures on the Apocalypse," pp. 85–92.

The meaning of the expression "which is, and which was, and which is to come," is not that of past, present, or future, but of eternity, and of unchangeableness, as in St. John i. 1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was *God*." The stress in reading should be laid, not on the last "was," but upon "God." Thus the salutation is threefold—

(a) From the eternal and unchanging Father.

(b) From the Holy Spirit, spoken of here in His sevenfold unity. Passages iii. 1, iv. 5, and v. 6 should be read to enable us to understand this; the seven Spirits are seen indissolubly united alike with the Father and the Son, as the Holy Spirit Himself proceeds from both: "when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me."¹ Here is the first use of "seven" as the mystical number, identical, as we have seen, with unity, signifying the Holy Spirit with His sevenfold spirits. The seven-branched candlestick is an illustration—one candlestick with seven branches, seven in one. So the sevenfold gifts in confirmation, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true Godliness, and the spirit of holy fear.

(c) From the Lord Jesus; the usual order of the Three Persons in the Holy and Undivided Trinity, is altered, apparently because St. John is dealing more especially with the work of Jesus Christ, and it is of Him, and it, that he is about to speak.

He is introduced as "the faithful Witness, the First Begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth," not so much to exhibit Him under His well-known titles of Prophet, Priest, and King, as to emphasize the three points connected with those titles:—

(a) His life on earth, which was one continuous *witness* (see 1 St. John v., where the words for "witness" and "record" are the same in the original).

(b) His risen life as Mediator, Advocate, and great High Priest in the true Holy of Holies, into which He once for all entered, to sprinkle the eternal mercy-seat, not with the blood of goats and calves, which could never take away sin, but with His own most precious blood, as of a lamb without

¹ St. John xv. 26.

blemish and without spot, and to offer, as the Great Intercessor, the incense of His own all-prevailing plea. This is all-important, especially as connected with the objective side of the Holy Communion; they who shut their eyes to it rob themselves of untold blessing. We have to deal not only with a past fact of priceless value, the death upon the cross, the making there, "by His one oblation of Himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world," but also with the present and continuous work of the presentation of the memorial of that sacrifice. The saving power of every sacrifice rested upon its presentation, and I know no truth more important to grasp than this, the ceaseless, continuous presentation by Jesus, in the courts of heaven, of His death once for all died on Calvary.

We must guide every sinner not simply to the memory of the distant past, but to the once crucified, and now living Redeemer, *as He is now*, clothed in the high-priestly vestments of His glorified humanity, with the sacred stigmata still upon His Body, Eternal Victim, and Eternal Priest; Himself as Priest presenting Himself continuously as Victim. No one who *really grasps* this truth can remain a non-communicant.

"Look, Father, look on His anointed Face,
And only look on us as found in Him;
Look not on our misusings of Thy grace,
Our prayer so languid, and our faith so dim:
For lo! between our sins and their reward
We set the Passion of Thy Son our Lord."

(Hymns A. & M., 322.)

(c) His universal reign: "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet." With this we must ally the most beautiful and helpful thought that He is *now* dealing with His Church, that her fortunes and experiences are to be like His. To her, as to each individual member, He is "the faithful Witness," the "revelation of the Father." The gospel has been beautifully defined as "God's life in Christ coming into our life, and making it new." If only we are faithful to this revelation, we can look forward with chastened hope and solemn joy to the second coming; He is going to reign with absolute rule.

Thus we have next the most beautiful revelation of that

which is ours *in Him*. Notice that praise for this is given to Him, not that "loved," but that "loveth" us, and "loosed us from our sins by His blood" (indicating that absolution is always ours in His own appointed way, and on His own conditions of repentance, faith, and confession). "And made us to be a kingdom, priests unto His God and Father." The evident reference is to Exod. xix. 6. The blessing bestowed on Israel just before the promulgation of the covenant of the law is perfected under the better covenant of the gospel.

A study of this passage will well repay us. The Israelites arrive at Mount Sinai little better than a rabble company of emancipated slaves, with very little organization, and no incorporation. But God has a higher intention for them. Theirs is to be, not the selfish, isolated, independent enjoyment of their own deliverance, but recognized relationship, one with each other; and so they leave Sinai a society, a nation, and a divinely constituted Church, with God-appointed regulations and conditions, and provisions for worship, a God-appointed ceremonial, God-appointed sacrifices, a God-appointed priesthood, and the assured promise of God's continual presence. So here we have the corporate and collective expression "kingdom," with, at the same time, the individual privilege and responsibility of the priesthood. Nor is the thought of being priests confined to those only who are called, by ordination, in a very especial sense, to that high and holy office. (Bishop Webb's addresses on "The Priesthood of the Laity in the Body of Christ" very beautifully bring out this truth.)

We are members of His kingdom in a twofold capacity: (a) in relation to ourselves; (b) in relation to others. Organic unity does not subtract from individual responsibility. No act of will, or habit of spiritual idleness, can release us from our responsibility towards the whole. Thus the noblest and grandest ambition we can have is to live up to the utmost perfection of which our renewed nature is capable, because as each of us, however humble or relatively unimportant his position, fills his place, plays his part, and performs his office in the body, so will the body be. Every one can do the work of a priest at least in two ways, he can minister to and plead for others, through the great High Priest.

The second advent, to which, with the subsequent

conquest of evil, and glory of the Church, the whole book is directed, is next introduced, both to encourage and to warn. "They shall look on Him whom they pierced." So St. John in his holy Gospel. The other evangelists make no mention of the piercing of the sacred side. "Every eye shall see Him," and they which pierced Him, the good and the bad, and especially, not only those who actually nailed Him to the cross, but all who have associated themselves at any time with the spirit of His murderers. Notice, that "kindreds" is in R.V. "tribes." Here is our first parallel with the discourse on the four last things: "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."¹ This is another figurative expression, and is opposed to "the faithful." Throughout the book, the godly and the ungodly are, for our warning and encouragement, seen separated from each other.

Notice the definite article before Alpha and Omega, and the depth of meaning in the revelation of Jesus Christ, as the "All-mighty." We are not only united in spirit with our blessed Lord, but we are sharing His fortunes, drinking of the same cup, baptized with the same baptism, treading the same path, bearing, in a sense, the same cross. Here is the help to enable us to continue fighting against temptation, and to remain faithful to the end. *He* is coming to "terminate the evil, and diadem the right," and *He* is *All-mighty* to do it. These are His two plans, and with them is to coincide our whole life, our every act, every word, and every thought, every aspiration, every prayer, every communion.

How earnestly it bids us pray that, day by day, and hour by hour, we may be found on the side of Christ.

¹ St. Matt. xxiv, 30.

INSTRUCTION III.

CHAPTER i. 10 TO END.

10 I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and what thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven Churches which are in Asia, unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden Candlesticks,

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14 His head, and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire,

15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace: and his voice as the sound of many waters.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the Sun shineth in his strength.

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead: and he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not, *I am the first, and the last.

18 I am he that liveth, and was dead: and behold,

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet

11 saying, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* to the seven churches; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamum, and unto Thyatira, and unto Philadelphia,

12 and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice which spake with me.

And having turned I saw seven golden ¹candle-

13 sticks; and in the midst of the ¹candlesticks one like unto ²a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle.

14 And his head and his hair were white as white wool, *white* as snow; and his eyes were as a

15 flame of fire; and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of

16 many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his

17 strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living

¹ Gr. *lamp-stands.*

² Or, *the Son of man.*

* Is. 41. 4. & 44. 6.

I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden Candlesticks. The seven Stars are the Angels of the seven Churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are the seven Churches.

one; and I ¹was dead, and behold, I am alive ²for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest ³in my right hand, and the seven golden ⁴candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven ⁴candlesticks are seven churches.

¹ Gr. *became.*

² Gr. *unto the ages of the ages.*

³ Gr. *upon.*
⁴ Gr. *lamp-stands.*

LET us make at once another addition to our index to the figurative language of this book. The seven stars are the angels of the seven Churches; the seven candlesticks are the seven Churches. There is no guesswork here; it is the Divine interpretation, as given by the Holy Spirit Himself to St. John.

We have seen that this book is one written for all Christians for all time. As Christianity implies the cross, so a Christian without a cross is an anomaly. We shall find set before us here strength and consolation for the tried and tired cross-bearers, for the Church catholic, and for the individual alike.

The scenes to be depicted will and must have their side of terror, awe, and majesty; but not for Christ's own. In an earthly court of justice, they who are on the side of wrong may well tremble at the solemnity of the ceremonial which surrounds the judicial proceedings; they on the side of right need have no fear at all, though they, too, are impressed with the awe and solemnity; they hear the evidence, they pity the prisoner, but they are glad when the jury gives a true verdict according to the evidence, and the right triumphs. So in this book, though there are many subdivisions, there are only two great classes—those who are on the side of Christ, and those who are against Him; those who are His own, and those who are not His own.

We are about to see our blessed Lord introduced to us in His solemn and *awe-full* majesty as Judge; but the

judgment is to be exercised upon that which is evil, and His own ought to rejoice. Moreover, we should rejoice that a kind of anticipatory judgment is going on within our hearts now, and that we are invited, in the grace of God, to sit in judgment on ourselves, approving the right and condemning the wrong. For such Christ's assurance is, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life" (St. John v. 24).

Our prayer as Christians should be that this judgment may ever be going on in our hearts, and find a quick response from our will. "Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness." "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen."

As the way to understand the Psalms aright is to put ourselves in the position of the writers at the time when they penned them, entering into their feelings of joy, or sorrow, or repentance, or hope, or trust, and thus find them a great assistance to ourselves in the corresponding circumstances of our own chequered life; so here we should try and put ourselves in St. John's place, "I fell at His feet as dead." Have we not often done the same under a deep sense of sin? And He has laid His right hand upon us, saying, "Fear not;" and then (as it were an invitation to cast the burden of all upon Him) "*I am the First, and the Last, and the Living One.*" So, though the picture may fill us with awe, we need not fear, but rather rejoice that the All-Powerful is on our side, and we on His; and that, while all wrong shall be destroyed, there is mercy infinite for the wrongdoer, if only he will turn from the wrong in penitence, confession, and faith.

It will be noticed, in v. 9, that St. John, the Apostle of Love, and the uncompromising champion of the true faith, speaks as our brother, sharing with all to whom and for whom he wrote, "the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus."

Tribulation is derived from the Latin word *tribulum*, that word signifying, on the authority of Archbishop Trench, the threshing instrument, or roller, by which the Romans separated the corn from the husk; and *tribulation*, in its primary significance, was this act of separation. But some Latin writers of the Christian Church appropriated the word and the image for the setting forth of a higher truth; and sorrow and distress and adversity being the appointed means for the separating in men of their chaff from their wheat, of what in them was light, and trivial, and poor, from the solid and the true; therefore He called these sorrows and adversities "threshings," that is of the inner spiritual man, without which there could be no fitting him for the heavenly kingdom—

"Till from the straw the flail the corn doth beat,
Until the chaff be purged from the wheat,
Yea, till the mill the grains in pieces tear,
The richness of the flour will scarce appear;
So, till men's persons great afflictions touch,
If worth be found, their worth is not so much,
Because, like wheat in straw, they have not yet
That value which in threshing they will get."

While, then, "the Kingdom which is in Jesus" is, as regards the future, a matter of hope, it involves, as regards the present, tribulation and patience: "In your patience ye shall win your souls."¹ St. John is realizing this as keenly, to say the least, as any one of us can. He is an exile in the Isle of Patmos, in the Ægean Sea, whither he had been banished by Domitian in the year A.D. 81. (He was recalled by Nerva in A.D. 96.) Let us remember that he is there for his faithfulness.

He is in the spirit on *the Lord's Day*² (a better title for us to employ, in my judgment, for the holy first day of the week than Sabbath, or Sunday, as emphasizing the

¹ St. Luke xxi. 19 (R.V.).

² Bishop Lightfoot thinks there are good, if not conclusive, reasons for thinking that the "Day of Judgment" is here intended. And, as the "last things" are but another way of stating the "Day of Judgment," we can easily understand that St. John prefaced his visions by a statement that in his inspiration he became a witness of the "Day of Judgment;" he was personally concerned with what took place then. See "The Sacrificial Significance of the term 'Lord's Supper,'" by Rev. C. R. D. Biggs, who adds, "... From Isaiah to Malachi the prophets are unanimous in describing 'the Day of Judgment' under the name of 'the Day of the Lord;' for them it was the day when the covenant God of Israel took vengeance on His foes; and would not the seer of the Apocalypse be likely to adopt their phrase?"

fact that it is not our own, but belongs especially to the Lord as His); "in the spirit," with "the outer world shut out; the inner spirit being taken possession of by God's Spirit, establishing an immediate connection with the invisible world" (Fausset). In this condition he hears a voice, trumpet-like, instructing him to write to the seven Churches, which, though mentioned by name and then existing, represent also the Holy Catholic Church in all countries and in all ages. The message is in no instance confined to the one Church specifically addressed. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."

St. John naturally turns, and sees seven golden candlesticks. The "seven" indicates unity; "elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth." We, being many, are one body in Christ. Notice that *candlesticks* are spoken of, not *candles*; not the light itself, but that in which God places the light; "not that light, but sent to bear witness of that light."

We have next revealed the appearance of the Lord Jesus:—

(a) As High Priest, for His garment is a high-priestly one, and the girdle a high-priestly accessory.

(b) As King, a High Priest for ever *after the order of Melchizedek*. He is emphatically *the* Priest upon His throne; the girdle is not simply partly of gold, as was the embroidered girdle of Aaron and his successors, but it is a golden one.

(c) As Judge. Compare St. John v. 22, 23, 26, 27, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man."

It is a well-known rule of law that men are to be judged by their peers. Not that we are Christ's peers, but "He who made Himself of no reputation" stooped to become one of us, and took upon Himself our flesh that, as man, He might judge man.

Commentators draw our attention to the fact that the characteristics of Christ are sevenfold, and are separable into the two divisions of "four" and "three," indicating

the union of God and the world ; the characteristics of personal appearance they note are four, and those of equipment three. All this is brought out in striking language.

(a) The head, the seat of judgment, is *white*, because He is all pure in thought and judgment, nothing influencing Him but right. He is the righteous Judge.

(b) His eyes are as a flame of the all-purging element of fire, lighting, searching, making manifest all sin, and, thank God, consuming it.

(c) His feet are like unto fine brass, of which I think the best explanation is that they appeared as though they had been made red hot in a furnace, signifying firmness and power, to put all enemies under His feet, and to destroy all that is evil.

(d) His voice is as the sound of many waters. As every eye is to see Him, so every ear is to hear.

So far His personal appearance and qualities (four) ; now His equipment (three).

(a) In His right hand, the hand of power and possession, are seven stars, that is, the angels of the seven Churches, He Himself being the High Priest over the undivided Church.

(b) Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword ; it is a broad sword. The same word is used in the passage addressed to the blessed Virgin in St. Luke ii. 35, " Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also." In Hebrews iv. 12, " The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," another word is used, but it helps us to understand that the Word of God is not for our comfort only, but as here in the person of the Word, to destroy all wrong, to convict of sin, to judge. " He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him : the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day " (St. John xii. 48).

(c) His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength ; another particular of awe-inspiring equipment. The scorching rays of the eastern sun in its zenith are the thought, and not merely the sun's light and brightness and dynamic force. Every aspect, then, is full of awe, and it may well be asked again, " Where is our comfort ? " Holy Scripture seems to concentrate the partial answers already given above to this natural question, in that

discourse upon the four last things, to which we shall have to refer many times, "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth ; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh " (St. Luke xxi. 25-28). So, when these things come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads, all ye faithful servants of Christ, for your salvation is very nigh at hand. Meanwhile pray (it is a very solemn prayer, and not to be uttered without thought and full purpose of heart), "Oh, my God, my Father, let Thy consuming fire never rest till it has taken the last taint and remnant of evil out of my heart ; let this vision of the awful majesty in which Thou art going forth, conquering and to conquer, add intensity to my earnestness of mind and heart ; at all costs rid me of my sin, and grant that I may be found ever on Thy side, condemning the wrong, and championing the right."

INSTRUCTION IV.

CHAPTER ii. 1-7.

2 Unto the Angel of the church of Ephesus, write, These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden Candlesticks:

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil, and thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my Name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

4 Nevertheless, I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

2 To the angel of the church in Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden

2 ¹candlesticks: I know thy works, and thy toil and patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them which call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them

3 false; and thou hast patience and didst bear for my name's sake, and hast not grown weary.

4 But I have *this* against thee, that thou didst

5 leave thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I come to thee, and will move thy ¹candlestick out of its place, except

6 thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also

7 hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the ²Paradise of God.

¹ Gr. lamp-stands.

² Or, garden: as in Gen. ii. 8.

WE are now approaching the consideration of the epistles to the seven Churches, being that part of the book which is the most easy to understand. As we consider them, let

us, keeping up our plan of study, strive to remember that we are to see in them (a) an address to every branch of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, in every age, and to every Christian who comes under the especial characteristics, and thus (b) an address to each Church, and each individual Christian, of warning or encouragement, as the case may be. Do not forget the interesting structure on the "number seven" basis, as set forth in Instruction II. (q.v.). Let us also add to our index, or key to the figurative language, the explanation of the word "angel." What is meant by this? The war of criticism wages fiercely round this point. Origen, in his Homilies, thinks that he is the guardian angel of the Church, as each individual Christian has his guardian angel. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (St. Matt. xviii. 10). Bishop Lightfoot seems to favour the same idea, and draws a contrast between the earthly fire of the candle in the candlesticks and the heavenly effulgence of the stars. I should, however, only weary you if I brought forward one tithe of the arguments *pro* and *con*. The most suitable interpretation seems to be that which sees in the angel the episcopus, or bishop of the Church; and if it be objected, even by so great and honoured an authority as Bishop Lightfoot, that the angel is made responsible for the Church in a degree wholly unsuited to any human vicar, we may, with all respect, reply, that the Church is viewed as concentrated in its bishop. Nowadays, as then, a bishop rises or falls in public opinion to an immense extent, according to the condition of his diocese. If the clergy are working together, as a corporate body, and the Church life is full of activity and vigour, it is upon the bishop that the greatest portion of the honour lies, and *vice versâ*.

Proceeding with the seven sub-divisions—

(1) Of the superscription, it is sufficient to say that Ephesus is probably put first, because it was the chief city of Asia Minor. St. John himself had laboured there, St. Timothy was its first bishop, and St. Paul had spent three years of earnest labour there (Acts xx. 31). It was the centre of the pagan worship of the goddess Diana (Acts xix. 35).

(2) The description of the aspect of the Saviour differs

from that given in the first chapter, in two particulars, which centre in the words "holdeth" and "walketh"—the expressions being very forcible, full of warning to the faithless, and full of encouragement to the weak, and help to the faithful. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." The expression "walketh" may refer to another part of the high priest's work, as suggested in Lev. xxiv. 2-4.

(3) and (4) The spiritual condition of the Church, with attachment of praise or blame.

In the case of Ephesus the praise exceeds the blame. Under the head of the former come works, toil, patience, holy intolerance of evil men and false apostles, and inward endurance; under the latter, the leaving of their first love. But even this is tempered by the fact that they hated the works of the Nicolaitans, and were one in mind with the Saviour in this point. A "Nicolaitan" is literally a "conqueror of the people," the same in Greek, as Balaam in Hebrew, "the destroyer of the people." There is, however, strong evidence of the existence of a sect who defiled the Agape with their licentiousness, and are denounced by St. Peter and St. Jude, who both refer strikingly to Balaam, in well-known and powerful language (2 St. Pet. ii. 15; St. Jude 11-13).

Notice that *works* are the test, not professions, or intentions, or even good wishes and resolutions. These works come under two heads, just as victories of faith do; they are (1) *active*, in the toil and in the trial of false doctrine, and (2) *passive*, in the patience (twice noticed) without growing weary—weary, that is, of God's work, not in it, for we are often weary in it, and the promise is to the weary, "I will refresh you." The Greek word used for "patience" literally means "remaining under," and thus signifies the dogged plodding on under all difficulties and under every burden, the never giving up.¹ They could not bear the evil men, but they did bear the reproach

¹ "In this noble word 'patience' there always appears (in the New Testament) a background of manliness, . . . the brave patience with which the Christian contends against the various hindrances, persecutions, and temptations that befall him in his conflict with the inward and outward world" (Ellicott on 1 Thess. i. 3, as quoted in Trench's "Synonyms," pp. 197, 198).

of Christ. Notice the word "bear" in vs. 2, 3. Ignatius, in his epistle to the Ephesians, especially commends them for their earnest zeal for the truth. He says, "Onesimus himself does greatly commend your good order in God: that you all live according to the truth, and that no heresy dwells among you. For neither do ye hearken to any one more than to Jesus Christ speaking to you in truth. . . . Nevertheless I have heard of some who have passed by you having perverse doctrine, whom ye did not suffer to sow among you, but stopped your ears, that ye might not receive those things that were sown by them." Notice, too, that the "trying" of the false apostles is "putting them on their trial," "testing." It is the same Greek word as is used in the temptation of our Lord.

It would be well for us to pause here and see how far we possess the good, and how far we are free from the bad qualities of this Church. Is there not a great danger of an easy tolerance of wrong doctrine nowadays? Are not opposite doctrines being taught by different parties within the Church's pale? There are certainly some who are making the two great Sacraments mere symbols, instead of "outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us"—Holy Baptism *only* a sign of profession, instead of *also* a sure and effectual means of the grace of regeneration; and the Holy Communion merely a subjective affectionate remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, instead of being also subjectively a true feeding on a true sacrifice, and objectively a pleading of the perfect memorial of the same.

We are to "bear" the weak, but not the evil. With regard to the other points of praise or censure, let us individually test ourselves. "Judge yourselves, brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord," but do not fall into the mistake of supposing that because the ecstasy of your first love is not so great as it was, on account of the toil and labour and patience that you have undergone, you have therefore necessarily left your "first love." The test of love is not feeling, but action. Would you bear, do, or submit to anything, rather than go back to the old sin? Then your "first love is not left." "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are

of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him" (1 St. John iii. 18, 19). Even if you are conscious that your love has declined and is burning low, your Saviour's love for you is strong still. Earth-clouds may often hide the sun, but the sun is behind them with all its light and brilliancy just the same. Listen we all then to—

(5) *The exhortation.*—To note the extent of our faults, and to set to work once again, as in the old days of love, in the spirit of repentance, or else Christ will come, not necessarily in His second advent, but in some particular judgment or visitation, and will remove the angel's candlestick out of its place, "except thou repent."

(6) *The call* to hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches is found in all the epistles. In the first three it is placed before the promise "to him that overcometh," and in the last four at the end, emphasizing the septenary structure and the division of the number seven, as already noticed, into three and four. We all have ears, but "the hearing ear the Lord hath made." "Take heed what you hear." "He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned."¹

(7) The promise to "him that overcometh." There is a play upon the words "overcometh" and "Nicolaitans," conquerors of the people, which should not be passed over. The promise should be, as it is intended, a real help to those who know, by experience, the struggles and temptation of the Christian life. It is a false notion that, because we experience the struggle, we are, therefore, all wrong. The very promise, "to him that overcometh," implies something to be overcome, and a consequent struggle. It is allied to ch. xxii. 2.

The history of the fall is clearly alluded to. Our first parents forfeited their right to paradise through the sin of disobedience. They were turned out in *mercy*, for if, in their fallen condition, they had eaten of the tree of life, they would have brought in perpetuity ruin upon themselves, and misery on their posterity. Behind the flaming sword, turning every way, we see the love which keeps the way of the tree of life. The ruin, otherwise unending, is now removed, and by God's grace, and Christ's work, and successful conflict, has given place not only to immortality, but to a condition of victory, which is in itself far higher than one of merely negative innocence. It is all the gift

¹ Prov. xx. 12; St. Mark iv. 24; Isa. l. 4.

of Christ, the full impartation of Him who is "the Resurrection, and the Life." We feed now, sacramentally but truly, on Him. "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me;" "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (St. John vi. 57, 53). And if no life, no overcoming. I should be sorry to think that any of those whom I am addressing are non-communicants, or careless communicants; but, if you are, remember that you are neglecting Christ, neglecting your own soul, and are guilty of "leaving your first love."

INSTRUCTION V.

CHAPTER ii. 8-11.

8 And unto the Angel of the Church in Smyrna, write, These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive,

9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, but thou art rich, and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but *are* the Synagogue of Satan.

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches. He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death.

8 And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which ¹was dead, and lived

9 *again*: I know thy tribulation, and thy poverty (but thou art rich), and the ²blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

10 Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; ³and ye shall have ⁴tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

¹ Gr. *became.*

² Or, *reviling.*

³ Some ancient authorities read *and may have.*

⁴ Gr. *a tribulation of ten days.*

THE key-thought of this address is "life in all its fulness." The life *here* is in the midst of temptation and trial; hereafter, for all who remain faithful to the end, life with *perfect* environment. It seems impossible to separate our thoughts in connection with this Church from St. Polycarp (whose name signifies "much fruit"), its bishop, who was, in all probability, one of St. John's own immediate disciples. He suffered martyrdom for Jesus Christ in the persecution under Marcus Aurelius. He was offered pardon and life on his way to execution, on condition that he reviled the sacred Name. Is it an extravagant conjecture to suggest that this promise, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life," stirred

him up to his noble reply, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He has never done me wrong; how then can I revile my King and my Saviour?" I quote this appropriate passage also from his epistle to the Philip-pians: "He that raised up Christ from the dead, will also raise up us in like manner, if we do His will and walk according to His commands and love those things which He loves."

This epistle to the Church in Smyrna falls into the seven divisions on which, as we have seen, the seven epistles are all planned.

(1) Of the superscription to the Church I need not say more in addition to the above than that Smyrna was at this time a city of great importance, commercially. It was, according to Strabo, one of the finest cities of Asia Minor, and the centre of the worship of the pagan god, Bacchus.

(2) The special aspect of the Saviour emphasizes the key-thought, life out of death, "the First and the Last, who became dead, and lived again;" "first," because He is before all things; "last," because after Him there shall be no other. "It became Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings."¹ Suffering, which all the faithfulness unto death implies, was a part of His discipline even as it is of His people's. He, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, was "faithful to Him who appointed Him," "Obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," He now lives, lives to dispense life!

(3) and (4) The spiritual condition of the Church, which, in this instance, is rather involved with the censure and commendation. The Revised Version omits the word "works." "Tribulation," already dwelt upon, is part of our Lord's legacy: "In the world ye shall have tribulation." In this instance it takes the shape of persecution, followed by the spoiling of their goods; this leads to poverty, enhanced, no doubt, by contrast with the surrounding opulence, and thus causing temptation. "There are," however, as Archbishop Trench says, "in God's sight, poor rich men, and rich poor men." A man may be as rich as Croesus, and as miserable as a lost spirit. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth

¹ Heb. ii. 10.

corrupt; and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”¹ Who are “they” who say they are Jews, and are not? Probably they who, while they asserted that they were the true people of God, bitterly opposed Christians, and actually joined the heathen in persecuting them. We are told that they clamoured that St. Polycarp should be cast to the lions; failing in this, that he should be burned alive, and they actually carried logs to the pile with their own hands! Such could not be Jews in any real sense, for the Jews worshipped the true God, and knew the law, “Thou shalt do no murder.” “He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”² These men are a synagogue of Satan, as opposed to the Church of Christ.

(5) Exhortation. Write over it the valuable thought, “In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.”³ O happy suffering soul! God is working out His own purpose by the trial; there is no (animal) life even here, without the *travail*, and the birth-pangs; *the* life is out of death; but if only our faith could lay hold of this injunction, “fear not the things which thou art about to suffer,” there is nothing which we could not endure in the strength that it would give. It is best to know that here sorrow in some shape or other is inseparable from Christ’s service, best to take it into account, best to face it in the Divine strength. So here the Smyrnæans are told the *nature* of their tribulation. Like that of Job, it is permitted by God to test faithfulness and develop character; but it comes from the devil (*diabolus*; one who throws things across the path), the slanderer, and accuser; he is to succeed in measure; some will by his machinations, acting through Jewish accusers upon the pagan authorities, be cast into prison, and upon all will come tribulation for ten days. Some think that this means the ten persecutions from Nero to Diocletian, some ten days literally, some ten years, some a number

¹ St. Matt. vi. 19-21.

² Rom. ii. 28, 29.

³ Heb. ii. 18.

signifying completeness, and so meaning "to the end of life." But the best explanation seems to be "a comparatively short time," probably that through which the persecution under Marcus Aurelius lasted. It will not last long. What a help that is! Read Gen. xxiv. 53; Numb. xi. 19; 1 Sam. xxv. 38; Dan. i. 12. "Be thou" (addressing all, through their bishop) "faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life;" it is addressed to us, as well as to them. "Be *thou* faithful," even though it lead to death. "Wilt *thou* lay down thy life for My sake?" "Wilt *thou* bear or face anything, everything, rather than sin?" The crown of life could perhaps be rendered better "life as a crown" (cf. 2 Tim. iv. 8). The metaphor is either the well-known one of the combatants in the Olympic games, or else is suggested by the garlands at the feasts of Bacchus, the favourite god of Smyrna.

(6) Of the call to hear there is no need to speak further.

(7) The promise to "him who overcometh." "He shall not be hurt of the second death;" death standing in evident contrast to the promised life, and to him who speaks, who "was dead, and is alive." What is the second death? It is mentioned again in ch. xx. 6. In ch. xx. 14 it is clearly stated to be "the lake of fire," and in ch. xxi. 8, "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," in which "the fearful and unbelieving have their part." A natural death we must all face, unless we first hear the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; but this does not for a moment separate us from Christ, who is our life (St. John v. 24). The second death is the result of separation from Christ (St. John xv. 6.) Archbishop Trench puts it very appositely when he speaks of "the death in life of the lost contrasted with the life in death of the saved." These have chosen death by deliberately resisting grace. "Ye will not come to ME, that ye might have life."¹ Christ has redeemed us from death, from the guilt and power of sin, which is death, but they who reject Him choose death. They are categorized in the passage already quoted (ch. xxi. 8). To sum up for our own benefit. Our life here is one of trial, but it leads to glory; more than that, it is one in which he who chooses the death of self, following out the baptismal pledge, "a death unto sin," has before him life as a crown. Crucifixion can never be anything but painful,

¹ St. John v. 40.

and it is slow and lingering in its effects. So is the crucifixion of self.¹ Our power is in the risen Christ. (Read Col. iii. 1-5, noticing as all-important the word "therefore.") "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof."² Bear all, now, with the grace of God, and then—"eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit."³

After the storm,
After fierce battle,
After earth's wounds,
Captivity,

a calm,
Peace,
Heaven's balm,
then release.

Ease,
Quietude,
Heaven's lines pure and plain,

after fearful pain,
after rage,
After life's blotted page.

Kisses,
After man's worst,
After an idol,
Heart weariness,

after the rod,
God's best,
God,
then rest.

After earth's darkness,
After temptation,
After dim vision,
Christ, life, and the soul's release.

light,
Peace.
sight,

E. ST. G. S. and C. S.

¹ "Keep God in remembrance till self is forgotten,
That you may be lost in the called,
Without distraction of caller and call."

(Nicholson's Selected Poems from the "Divani
Shamsi Tabriz," Poem IV.)

² Gal. v. 24.

³ 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

INSTRUCTION VI.

CHAPTER ii. 12-17.

12 And to the Angel of the Church in Pergamos, write, These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges :

13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's seat is, and thou holdest fast my Name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful Martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of *Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

16 Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden Manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write ;

These things saith he that hath the sharp two-edged sword: I know where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's throne is: and thou holdest fast my name, and didst not deny my faith, even in the days

¹of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I

have a few things against thee, because thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit

fornication. So hast thou also some that hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner.

16 Repent therefore; or else I come to thee quickly, and I will make war against them with the

sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that overcometh, to him will I give of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it.

¹ The Greek text here is somewhat uncertain.

* Num.
25.

THIS epistle is to the angel of the Church in Pergamos, or, as it is in the Revised Version, Pergamum.

The words are still ringing in our ears, "Be thou faithful, even unto death." The root thought in this instruction is fidelity even amidst the horrors of persecution, which, in this case, actually leads to death.

Proceeding again, on the lines of sevenfold division, we notice—

(1) The Church addressed. Pergamum was a city of great beauty, rather than of extensive commerce. The derivation of our word "parchment" is "Pergamena Charta." It was famous for its library. Its chief interest to us, however, is that it possessed a celebrated temple of Æsculapius, the god of the medical art. Here, probably, as in other places, he was worshipped under the form of a living serpent, which was fed in the temple, and considered as its divinity. Æsculapius is often represented with a rod, around which a serpent is entwined.

The devil, in the history of the fall, comes before us as a serpent. He is styled in this very book "that old serpent called the devil, and Satan, which *deceiveth* the whole world." So it seems reasonable to suppose that when the Holy Spirit says that this Church dwells "where Satan's throne is," and that Antipas was slain "where Satan dwelleth," the reference is to the varied iniquities which were allied with this worship, and which led to the exercise of witchcraft, and many another kindred sin and iniquity. Notice "Satan's throne," the place where he, in profane mockery, kept his court. Compare 2 Thess. ii. 4, the imitation of the true by the false, and then contrast the promise in ch. iii. 21.

(2) The aspect of the Saviour. As with Ephesus (ii. 1), and Smyrna (ii. 8), it is one in which He has already appeared (i. 16), the difference being that, whereas there the sharp two-edged sword is described as going "out of His mouth," here the thought is separated, the expression "sword of My mouth" being reserved for v. 16. I think the separation is made with the object of guiding our attention to the twofold use to which God puts this sword. (a) To convince and so bring to repentance; (b) to condemn the impenitent.

(3) We now come to the all-important question of the spiritual condition of the Church with (4) corresponding censure or commendation. Let us look at the praise first. We omit the words "thy works." Notice the expression

"holdest fast My Name." The present tense implies that they held it up to date. As Christ holds the Church in his right hand, here is the Church's response in action, holding fast to Him, to His Name, and therefore to His Nature and Revelation. As prayer in Christ's Name must be in accordance with Christ's character, so "to hold fast His Name" is to hold fast to His truth, and to the blessed relation which He holds to us and to the Father. We should connect it with three promises in St. John's Gospel (a) St. John xiv. 26, "The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send *in My Name*." (b) St. John xv. 16, "That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father *in My Name*, He may give it you." (c) St. John xvi. 23, "If ye shall ask anything of the Father, He will give it you *in My Name*."

The second subject of commendation is that they did not, even under the pressure of great persecution, deny the faith. There is good reason for supposing that in Pergamum the persecution of the Christians first reached to bloodshed. The faithful in Smyrna had, by the agency of the devil, been imprisoned; these are *killed*; one of the heroes, faithful unto death, being mentioned by name. I do not find anything further known of Antipas; but as in the case of Polycarp, it is interesting to notice that his name has a special meaning, viz. "against every one"—i.e. standing out against every one and everything opposed to Christ.

We note the points of blame. They are "few" as compared with those of praise. It seems best to look upon vs. 14 and 15 as dealing with the same class of evil. As we saw in Instruction IV., "Balaam" in Hebrew and "Nicolas" in Greek have the same meaning, viz. "a destroyer or conqueror of the people." Thus the meaning of this passage is that as in the Old Testament narrative Balaam tempted Israel to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication, so this Church had a sect in it which counselled the same abominations. The sins mentioned are, almost certainly, to be literally understood, for the impure character of the heathen festivals is all too well known. "It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."¹ The Christians were in danger of falling into the traps set for them by their false teachers, who would have led them, by specious arguments, into a deadly sin.

¹ Eph. v. 12.

The sacrificing to idols led, no doubt, also to a great temptation to the Gentile converts, for the idol-meats, after a part of them had been offered in sacrifice, were generally placed upon the table as an act of hospitality, so that to abstain from these meant almost to entirely withdraw from social intercourse with the heathen. It thus represents, among other things, a *society* temptation. As bearing upon the question, it is interesting to refer to the letter of the Apostles in Acts xv. 28, 29. In 1 Cor. viii. we see that some of the Christians unnecessarily worried themselves upon the question whether *any* meat that they sat down to in heathen houses had been so offered; others went to the opposite extreme, and knowingly ate of the same, declaring that an idol was nothing. St. Paul deals with the whole subject in 1 Corinthians.

(5) Exhortation. This, as in the case of Ephesus, is to repentance; only now "quickly" is added. This style of warning, as applicable to the Church in general, will be seen, throughout the addresses to the Churches, to increase in force, till, with nearness of approach, it reaches the "standing at the door and knocking." In this particular case notice "thee" and "them." "I will fight against *them* with the sword of My mouth," as the angel withstood Balaam of old. As he, and the Israelites he seduced, perished with the sword, so with HIS spiritual sword will HE do battle with *them*, with HIS Word and HIS truth brought home in terrible condemnation to *their* guilty consciences.

(6) The call to hear.

(7) The promise to "him that overcometh" falls into three parts: "eat," "white stone," "new name." We may expect to find some antithesis or correspondence to the trial undergone, and the self-denial practised. Here it is. Idol-meats, hidden manna! Manna means "What is it?" 1 Cor. ii. 9 may therefore explain the reference; but I think our Lord's words in St. John vi. will help us most, "I am the Living Bread which came down from heaven." Eating Christ's Body and Blood sacramentally may, in a sense, be eating the *hidden* Manna. We feed sacramentally now, and that upon a true Sacrifice. "My flesh is meat indeed." Our baptismal union is the union of real life (unless we have committed spiritual suicide); but hereafter we shall have it in all its fulness, even though it be hidden

now. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." It is hidden from the world; or "hidden" may be used in another sense: "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face;" or, yet again, "hidden" as the pot of manna was—preserved imperishable in the sacred ark.

"A white stone." The same word is translated "voice," in the sense of "vote," in Acts xxvi. 10. There are many interpretations, of which, from the commentators at my disposal, I give the most likely. It may be (1) a ticket which entitled the victor in the games to food at the public expense, in which case we should connect it with the heavenly manna. (2) Others connect it with the new name, as it was the custom to engrave stones with names and inscriptions. (3) The mysterious "urim" (diamond), concealed in the high priest's breast-plate of judgment, the engraving on which no one knew but the high priest himself. (4) The white pebble of the ballot-box. Christ's vote for them, or thus a verdict of acquittal for Christ's sake.

"Upon the stone a new name." "New" is another keyword: "new" Jerusalem; "new" song; "new" earth; "all things new"! The *new name* is an appropriate reward for those who have held fast *Christ's Name*. "Which no man knoweth," the knowledge of experience; true even here, for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14). Note here that white is the colour of heaven. Of this passage there are also many explanations, but I think it means that we are to have a new patronymic from our heavenly Father (just as we inherit one from our earthly father), expressing the fact that we are His, the children of God faithful in "this naughty world," and now enrolled in the company of heaven. "He calleth His own sheep by name."

With this promise in view, let us see our own lesson. The danger set forth here is not so much that of denying Christ's faith in the face of *persecution*, as of falling under the easy-going, specious, and (to some minds) attractive temptations of undenominationalism and unsectarianism. The Church is not a sect. One of our greatest dangers to-day is that of clipping truth at its edges, of knocking off this little piece of the Catholic faith to please one body

of Nonconformists, and that to please another, until the great bulwarks of the faith are, slowly, but all too surely imperilled. If the indefiniteness of to-day increases, we shall soon have nothing definite handed on to posterity. Oh that God may open the eyes of godly Nonconformists to this great danger, especially as it exists in connection with our School Boards, before it be too late. For ourselves, as Churchmen, let us hold fast to this truth, "Whosoever wishes to be safe, before all things it is necessary that he *hold* the Catholic faith."¹ It is not easy, especially if we have affectionate dispositions, even to talk like this, for it seems unkind, and ungenerous. It certainly is not easy to act on this principle, for it often looks like separation ; but the truth is more precious even than external unity. God knows, and God sees. "I know that thou holdest fast My Name, and hast not denied My Faith." May each one of us, in the spirit of St. John, in the spirit of truth as well as love, in the spirit of Christ, who is all truth and all love, be, wherever right and truth and the one faith, "once for all delivered to the saints," are concerned, whatever it may entail in the way of earthly loss, an Antipas ! against the world, if the world be in error, for Christ's sake.

¹ The opening sentence of the Athanasian Creed, as it ought to be translated : "Quicumque vult salvus esse, . . . teneat."

INSTRUCTION VII.

CHAPTER ii. TO END.

18 And unto the Angel of the church in Thyatira, write, These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine brass :

19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works, and the last *to be* more than the first.

20 Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman *Jezebel, which calleth herself a Prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her, into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23 And I will kill her children with death, and all the Churches shall know that *I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts : and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you none other burden :

25 But that which ye have

18 And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write ;

These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like unto burnished brass : I know thy works, and thy love and faith and ministry and patience, and that thy last works are more than the first.

20 But I have *this* against thee, that thou sufferest ¹the woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess ; and she teacheth and seduceth my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols.

21 And I gave her time that she should repent ; and she willeth not to repent

22 of her fornication. Behold, I do cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent

23 of ²her works. And I will kill her children with ³death ; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts : and I will give unto each one of you according to your

24 works. But to you I say, to the rest that are in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching, which know not the deep things of Satan, as they say ; I cast upon you none other burden.

* 1 Kin.
16. 31.

* Jer. 11.
20.
& 17. 10.

¹ Many authorities, some ancient, read *thy wife*.

² Many ancient authorities read *their*.

³ Or, *pestilence*.

already, hold fast till I come.

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

* Ps. 2. 9.

27 (*And he shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers;) even as I received of my Father.

28 And I will give him the morning star.

29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

25 Howbeit that which ye have, hold fast till I

26 come. And he that overcometh, and he that keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give

27 authority over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of

iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to shivers; as I also have received of my Father:

28 and I will give him the morning star. He that

29 hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

¹ Or, iron; as vessels of the potter, are they broken.

(1) THE name of Thyatira, the Church which is next addressed, is familiar to us as the home of Lydia. She may have been, and very likely was, the introducer of the Christian religion into her native city. An inscription, discovered in modern times, in honour of Antonius Claudius Alphenus, by the Corporation of Dyers, confirms the conjecture, from the Acts of the Apostles, that the place was noted for the art of dyeing. The description of the Saviour which we shall notice presently, may be looked upon as peculiarly appropriate, if we remember that the principal heathen deity of the city was Apollo, worshipped as the sun-god. There was also a temple outside the walls occupied by the sibyl, who is supposed by many to have been in this instance a Jewess, who carried on her work, if not with the permission, at least with the non-intervention, of the authorities.

(2) As in every previous instance, the special aspect of the Saviour is a portion of His first description in ch. i. Here the reference is to vs. 14, 15 in that chapter, only with the important difference that whereas there He came before us as Son of man, He is here set forth as Son of God. This would be a title peculiarly appropriate in the face of the heathen worship; and is for the encouragement of those for whom the epistle was written. The true God, the maker of all these things which they ignorantly worshipped, is in the midst of the Church, "therefore shall she not be removed; God shall help her, and that right early." There is, no doubt, also, in connection with v. 27 (*q.v.*), an allusion to *Psa. ii. 7 (q.v.)*. Nor can we pass

over the connection of the "eyes like a flame of fire" with the "searching the reins and hearts," and "the feet like unto fine brass" with the "breaking to shivers" of all that is opposed to God.

(3) Spiritual condition, with (4) commendation or censure. The commendation, especially when read in the Revised Version, is beautiful; the change from "service" to "ministry" suggests the ministering to others which God will not forget; it is the practical expression of love: "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye showed toward His Name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister."¹ Faith is an essential element, for it is faith which "worketh by love;" while patience comes in as its subjective expression, the endurance for Christ's sake. Then "works" is repeated with beautiful force. Christ knew her works from first to last. And there had been distinct progress; "I know thy works, . . . and that thy last works are more than the first." Her condition in this respect is the reverse of Ephesus.

The point of blame is that they had one among them whose presence and teaching they tolerated, though it was most evil; if we take one view of the meaning of "Jezebel," they not only tolerated, but were allied with it. The history and character of Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab—false, idolatrous, and carnal—are too well-known to need mention here. Grotius, with many others, translates "that woman" as "thy wife," the wife of the bishop; others, who reject the explanation of "angel" as "bishop," and look upon it as the Church itself, also translate this as "thy wife." The Church is thus seen going out, as Ahab did, to take an idolatrous wife. We look upon the angel as bishop, but rather in his representative than his personal character, so that we too may see much to recommend itself to us in this latter explanation. If, for the sake of worldly wealth, Thyatira had entered into an unholy alliance with the heathen, and tolerated or acquiesced in the accompanying iniquity, there could not be a more apt type of her sin than the wicked Jezebel, with all her whoredoms and witchcraft, and her hatred and opposition to God. If we take the passage as in our received version, "that woman," it is perhaps the Hebrew sibyl who is here referred to. Notice,

¹ Heb. vi. 10.

then, "callesth herself a prophetess." She would be like Jezebel in her support of lying and deceiving prophets. Or it may symbolize an heretical party, very like the Nicolaitans, not simply, as at Pergamum, allowed to exist, but having a recognized position. Note that the expression "sufferest" is the same Greek word which is translated in the Gospels "let alone." Notice, too, that the sin is greater than that of Pergamum, even as Balaam was an enemy from *without*, and Jezebel an allowed evil *within*. We shall get at the main point, I think, if we say that what Jezebel was to Ahab and Israel, this symbolical Jezebel was to the Bishop and Church of Thyatira. She led God's servants into the grossest licence and into abominable idolatry. Archbishop Trench well points out the contrast between Thyatira and Ephesus—in the one case zeal for orthodoxy, but little love; in the other activity of faith and love, but insufficient zeal for discipline and doctrine. Her sin is aggravated in that Christ had given her time to repent (to change her mind), and she would not repent "out of" her fornication; "she willeth not to repent." She may have seen her sin, but she would not give it up.

(5) The exhortation. This is preceded here by threatened punishment. (a) Like sin like punishment; her bed is the scene of her sin; the bed of anguish and suffering is the scene of her punishment, and the offspring of her sin are to be killed, as Ahab's seventy sons were, unless (still a door of escape open) they repent out of her *works*. I do not like to destroy (as I think it does) the force of the word "children" by saying that they are the less guilty party; children inherit their nature from their parents. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will to do;" so here the children are they who partake of the Jezebel nature and spirit, and will to do her works. "All the Churches" (not sects) form and typify the One Church. The rule of judgment here is that of our Lord Himself, "The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His angels, and then He shall reward every man according to his works." The expression "searcheth the reins and hearts" is from Jeremiah xi. 20. Here is the seat of the passions and affections, and what goes on therein is reckoned among our "works." (b) Here is the parallel to the seven thousand in Israel who did not bow the knee to Baal. With the non-recognition of the errors dealt with

above, there is now coupled the rejection of the pretensions of the Gnostics who laid claim, as their name implies, to a knowledge of the deep things hidden from others. As the Holy Spirit "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," so their depths were depths of Satan. The "Speaker's Commentary," by Archdeacon Lee, which is full of the most painstaking research, quotes from St. Hippolytus to the effect that the Ophites (*ὄφεις*, a serpent) were the first who called themselves gnostics, saying that they alone knew the depths! They held that the serpent was Christ, and that He who was born of the Virgin was Jesus alone, upon whom Christ afterwards descended! They reversed the position of Satan and God, and so worshipped evil as good!

No other burden is cast upon them than that already laid upon them by the Church (cf. Acts xv. 28, 29), which necessarily included a perseverance in their opposition to the Jezebel and the gnostic sin, a burden quite sufficient for the faithful to bear!

(6) The call to hear, as before.

(7) The promise "to him that overcometh and keepeth Christ's works to the end." This promise is followed, not preceded, by the call to hear. The same remark will be seen to apply to each subsequent epistle; following Professor Milligan, we note that it marks the division of the number "seven" into its component parts "three" and "four," in the place of "four" and "three." It may be a fanciful idea, but perhaps the temptations in the first three cases were more from within, and in the last four from without. Notice, in vs. 26, 27, the identification of Jesus with His people, and the promise attached to perseverance. The expression "the nations" is, I think, in this case to be interpreted differently to that in the twenty-first chapter. It seems to mean here all who are opposed to God, in contrast with the faithful; thus each one who is faithful now is to be associated with Christ in the glorious day when Psalm ii. shall be fulfilled. Christ receives all "from His Father," and gives all to His people. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." Faithfulness, and union with Him here in trial and suffering, mean union with Him in His kingdom. The word used for "rule" is the rule of a shepherd; the pastoral staff, which is, primarily, to guide and help, is to be the pastoral rod, and, as a potter

dashes in pieces a vessel that fails to answer its maker's design, so will God deal with those that remain finally reprobate. Into the hope of the universalist (which we shall deal with incidentally later on), I have no space to go here; only let me say three things. (1) That there is no limit either to God's power, or God's mercy; (2) universal salvation means universal destruction of sin; (3) *loved sin* must always imply death and hell. The sharing in Christ's kingdom is a promise of which this book is full, for all those who "continue His faithful soldiers and servants unto their lives' end."

"I will give him the Morning Star." Either the glories of which that star is an emblem, or, more probably, Himself. "I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star." Notice that it is allied with the sceptre in Balaam's prophecy, "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel." Each angel is a star; Jesus Himself is the perfect Star. To possess Him is to be fully satisfied, and to shine for ever and ever with His light gives a simply infinite hope and expectation of the joy of the work of heaven!

Our own personal lesson is twofold: (1) faithfulness to sound doctrine, more especially in the light of danger from the habits of the world without; to these, it is clear, we can afford to yield absolutely nothing. (2) Progress, in spite of opposition from the world without, in works, and love, and service, and faith, and patience; on, on, on unto perfection. Here we have many hindrances from without; there is a sort of gnosticism, a sort of undeclared claim to higher knowledge, which puts religion into the background as a thing that has had its day; against this I would warn all, especially the young, and those who have the care of them. Then there is secularism and "anything-arianism," "so long as a man is a good fellow, it does not matter much what his religious belief is;" and a growing neglect of religion among all classes. All these seem to speak to us and say, "Be faithful," or, as the portrait in Simeon's room seemed to him to say, "Be in earnest; be in earnest." Do not forget these two principles: "where there is life there is growth," and "no food means no growth." "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" that is the way to become a "gnostic," rightly so called.

INSTRUCTION VIII.

CHAPTER iii. 1-6.

<p>*1 Thess. 5. 2. 2 Pet. 3. 10.</p>	<p>3 And unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis write, These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. 2 Bewatchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. *If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. 4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. 5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the *book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his Angels. 6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.</p>	<p>3 And to the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead. Be thou watchful, and stablish the things that remain, which were ready to die: for I have ¹found no works of thine fulfilled before my God. 3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and didst hear; and keep it, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. But thou hast a few names in Sardis which did not defile their garments: and they shall walk with me in white; 5 for they are worthy. He that overcometh shall thus be arrayed in white garments; and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.</p>	<p>¹ Many ancient authorities read <i>not found thy works.</i></p>
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THE letter to the Church in Sardis. (1) This town was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia. Thucydides gives an interesting account of it. It was one of the most opulent cities of the East. Cræsus, whose wealth has passed into

a proverb, was its king when it was captured by Cyrus. It afterwards passed into the hands of the Romans, and then began to decline in importance. It was destroyed about the commencement of our Christian era by an earthquake, but was rebuilt by Tiberius. The chief point of interest and instruction to us is that its inhabitants bore a bad name for their voluptuous habits, and you will notice that this Church is the first that is wholly reprovèd. The only redeeming point is that, "even in Sardis" there were a few that had not defiled their garments. It was one of the centres of the worship of Cybele, with which were associated the wildest orgies. This will convey the characteristics of the Church, and indicate the dangers surrounding it.

(2) The aspect of the Saviour. This is, once again, introduced from ch. i. 4 and 16. It is peculiarly appropriate to a Church described as having only "a name to live," and being "dead." Christ is said to have "the seven Spirits of God," and so comes to this dead Church (*a*) in all the fulness of His power, to urge and to awaken them to repentance; and (*b*) as the "Giver of life," to restore them from their state of death! Notice that He still "holds in His hand the seven stars," the "angels of the Church," and, therefore, this guilty one. Still "holds" it; so that there is even yet hope, if she will only repent! And notice carefully the connection between the Divine gifts and the human ministry, the Church: the energy of the Holy Spirit giving power and life in the Holy Catholic Church.

(3) and (4) Commendation and censure coupled with the spiritual condition of the Church. (*a*) "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." "She," says St. Paul, "that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth." But this condition is something worse: Sardis had a name for vitality, a name of renown, yet He who judges the hearts, and the inner as well as the outer life, pronounced her to be dead! (*b*) The "works," on which, no doubt, much of her public estimation rested, were none of them fulfilled before God. She had undertaken a quantity of work, and had let it remain unfinished.

Here we have not only a solemn warning to those who are slothful, or lacking in perseverance, beginning but not carrying through; but a condemnation of what the Bible calls "dead works," those in which there is no spirituality.

The Church is Christ's body, and is energized by the Holy Spirit ; but wherever, in the individual, the spirituality is absent, or the spiritual influence is checked, there the works will be unfulfilled—they will fall short of their aim. There are certain sins, remember, which will always check the Holy Spirit's influence ; the Seven Deadly Sins, of course, and then others of a kindred nature, *e.g.* unsanctified ambition—there are few things which can lay hold of a man and do him such deadly harm as this ;—or unforgiveness ; I would have you always ally the injunction, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption," with that which follows, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice : and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you."¹ As they who worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth, so they who work for Him must work for Him in spirit and in truth. The redeeming point is, as we have already noticed, that even in Sardis there were some which did not defile their garments ; and it is important to notice that, fallen as the Church was, these few had not separated themselves from her. Schism is not only a terrible sin, but it is a foolish and unnatural one, for it is a sin against the body. They who see, or think they see, weak points and faults in the Church, should stay within her and try to remedy them, not leave, and so weaken her. Notice next a beautiful thought for individual comfort. Sardis had a name to live though she was dead ; but there were *names* in Sardis which the Heavenly Shepherd knew. "He calleth His own sheep by *name*." They had the reality, the spiritual life, even in the midst of their licentious surroundings ; they did not defile their garments, the robe of their baptism, when they "put on Christ." Alas ! none had kept their robe wholly unspotted ; but the comparison is with empty professors, who care little or nothing about the inner life. The true soul desires above all else to keep "unspotted from the world," and if it has contracted defilement "by the malice of the devil, or by its own carnal will and frailty," it washes its robes, and makes them white in the Blood of the Lamb. Do not be overmuch

¹ Eph. iv. 31, 32 (R.V.).

cast down if you feel your own sinfulness; it is one of God's greatest blessings to teach us this. Mr. Jukes, in his "Types of Genesis," has a valuable footnote (p. 117) in which he quotes a letter from Terstegen to his sister, which is as appropriate here as it is there. As he says, "it may comfort some." He writes—

"MY DEAR SISTER, — Notwithstanding the wretched state in which you describe yourself to be, I am still quite at ease regarding it, and am under no apprehension of evil consequences. Were I concerned for you after the manner of men, and were I glad to see your own life, the life of self, preserved, I might have reason to fear, because our Lord attacks it so forcibly and severely, and pursues it so warmly, that it must soon give up the ghost; which takes place, and is accomplished by the complete and eternal resignation of yourself into the free hands of God. You see and feel nothing but sin and corruption within you. Whithersoever the mind turns and directs its view, everything is misery, grief, and sin; and the way to escape from it is closed, and appears as if it were always to continue so. Ah! thinks subtle self-love, could I only find a little nook to which I might retire and take a little rest! Listen, O soul! cease thy turning; the more thou seekest to make matters the better, the worse thou makest them. Therefore, as long as it pleases God to leave you miserable, corrupt, and without strength, let it also please you. You behold your real self at present, as you are in yourself. Thank God for having thus disclosed your inward wound to your view. Previously, when the dealings of grace with you were so gentle, nature and sense occasionally participated in it; but in the way in which you are at present, they are deprived of all support. It is impossible that nature and sense should acquiesce in this total destruction. But they must die. Commit yourself, therefore, wholly to God; trust Him, and you shall be healed."

(5) We must go back a little for the exhortation. "Be watchful" (rather, "become awake"), "rouse from your sloth and want of thoroughness." "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Pride and self-dependence lead almost always to want of watchfulness. Strengthen the things that remain, "which were ready to die," showing that though

she was, as a Church, dead, it was a death from which, like that of sleep or trance, there might be an awakening. There is a spiritual death from which He who raised Lazarus can raise men. It is of this Jesus speaks when He says, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." But "the things that remain," "the few works" not wholly dead, and the few graces left, were "ready to die." The faithful up till now had saved the Church. "I will not destroy it for ten's sake." I cannot see, as some do, how "things" can be made to refer to the faithful *persons*, for they were not "ready to die." The Church is next bidden, "Remember therefore how thou hast received and didst hear; and keep it, and repent." There had evidently been better days once; more than that, the construction of the sentence conveys the meaning that she had kept what she had received, but had not lived up to it—she held the truth in unrighteousness. The statement of her reception is in the perfect tense, that of her hearing in the aorist; she once "heard" in the sense of "obeying;" she did so no longer. She is to "hold fast" (present tense), to "keep on holding fast" to the truth. "Hold fast" is the same word used often by our blessed Lord in His discourses in St. John's Gospel, and translated "keep;" and, while holding fast to the truth, she is to amend, by an immediate and decisive act (aorist again), her unpractical faith. "He that hath My commandments, and *keepeth* them, he it is that loveth Me." If she does not watch, Christ will come (the coming marking a distinct approach towards a climax), "will come as a thief," without further warning. This is another illustration of the suggestion that the Apocalypse is an enlargement of our Lord's discourse on the four last things recorded by the synoptists (compare St. Matt. xxiv. 42, 43).

"What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." "The last day," says St. Augustine, "is hidden from us, that every day may be observed by us."

(6) The call to hear.

(7) The promise to him that overcometh. Notice that the Revised Version translates "shall *thus* be arrayed;" we should, therefore, I feel sure, connect it with the promise which immediately precedes it, "they shall walk with Me in

white ; for they are worthy." "Walk" of necessity implies life, and is therefore most appropriate to the faithful in the midst of a dead Church. It implies liberty, too. The reward is in character with that for which they are rewarded ; they "kept their garments undefiled," now "they walk with *Me* in white." Notice also especially the word "worthy," in contrast with the want of thoroughness. "The workman is worthy of his hire," so "he that overcometh shall *thus* be arrayed in white garments," the "livery of heaven." We may connect the thought with 2 Cor. iii. 18, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," in which case it is helpful to remember that this glory is only grace perfected, even as grace is only glory begun.

"I will in no wise blot his name" (notice "name" again) "out of the book of life."¹ Every year from our own list of burgesses the hand of death removes some names. A similar register was kept in ancient times. Yet, notice (for we must keep strictly to Holy Scripture) that we are not told that any names shall be blotted out, only that some shall, most assuredly, *not* be blotted out. The promise is a combination of that in St. Matt. x. 32 with that in St. Luke xii. 8. Archbishop Trench, noting the omission of the words "in heaven," says "He sets His seal from heaven upon many of His words spoken on earth."

The "Speaker's Commentary" valuably suggests that it is worthy of notice, and a matter of great interest, that the sayings of our Lord as to "watching," "the coming of the thief," "the book of life," and the "confessing," find no place in St. John's Gospel, another point strongly in favour of the view just expressed as to the discourse on the four last things.

Our own lessons have been clearly indicated as we passed this epistle in review. Let us personally lay to heart God's warnings against dead works, want of thoroughness, schism, want of watchfulness ; and against the pride and self-dependence which lead to these. While we "hold fast" to sound doctrine, let us see that we are equally diligent as to corresponding practice ; but, above all, pray that we may

¹ A powerful illustration is furnished by Marino Faliero's blank escutcheon in the Palace of the Doges at Venice.

never have only "a name to live," while we are really dead !

What is a hypocrite? We ask the question in all solemnity, because Christ never used, of any one else, the scathing words He did of these ; and we ask it in loving care for souls, because many are writing, in fear and trembling, bitter things against themselves. Is every one, whose inward experience does not coincide line by line and angle by angle with his outward life, to come necessarily under this designation ? Then we are all hypocrites. There is no man living who would wish to have the lime-light of the world's criticism fall upon his inmost experiences ; many a man of pure, upright, and holy life knows all too well the terrible details of the battle with Apollyon, as he "wrestles not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."

"And none, O Lord, have perfect rest,
For none are wholly free from sin ;
And they, who fain would serve Thee best,
Are conscious most of wrong within."
(Hymns A. & M., 20.)

Would you know if a man is a hypocrite? Steal into his inner chamber, and catch the words which are going up from his inmost soul : "Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart : prove me, and examine my thoughts ;" "I would not have the world know my temptations, but I am glad that Thou knowest ;" "Cleanse the thoughts of my heart by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that I may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy holy Name ; through Jesus Christ our Lord." Such an one is no hypocrite, whatever his temptations may be, and whatever his shortcomings. If this is our habit, we need not fear. For so long as God's grace leads us to heart-cleansing and thought-cleansing, we shall not have, from His point of view, "only a name to live" !

INSTRUCTION IX.

CHAPTER iii. 7-13.

7 And to the Angel of the Church in Philadelphia write, These things saith he that is Holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth ;

8 I know thy works : behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it : for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my Name.

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie : behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11 Behold, I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12 Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the Temple of my God, and he shall go no more out : and I will write upon him the Name of my God, and the name of the City of my God, *which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God : And I will write upon him my New name.*

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write ;

These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and none shall shut, and that shutteth, and

8 none openeth : I know thy works (behold, I have¹ set before thee a door opened, which none can shut), that thou hast a little power, and didst keep my word, and didst

9 not deny my name. Behold, I give of the synagogue of Satan, of them which say they are Jews, and they are not, but do lie ; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have

10 loved thee. Because thou didst keep the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of² trial, that *hour* which is to come upon the whole³ world, to⁴ try them that dwell upon the

11 earth. I come quickly : hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take

12 thy crown. He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the⁵ temple of my God, and he shall go out thence no more : and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out

¹ Gr. *given.*

² Or, *temptation.*

³ Gr. *inhabited earth.*

⁴ Or, *tempt.*

⁵ Or, *sanctuary :* and so through- out this book.

13 He that hath an ear, let
him hear what the Spirit
saith unto the Churches.

of heaven from my God,
and mine own new name.
13 He that hath an ear, let
him hear what the Spirit
saith to the churches.

(1) PHILADELPHIA, to the Church of which the next epistle is addressed, was the second city in Lydia, and took its name from King Attalus Philadelphus, by whom it was built; like Sardis, however, it fell into the hands of the Romans. It still exists under Turkish misrule, and certain missionaries, about the year 1822, stated that at that time there were five Christian Churches there. It was nearly destroyed by an earthquake about the commencement of our era.¹ Dr. Smith, in his "Dictionary of the Bible," says that the locality was subject to constant earthquakes, which in the time of Strabo rendered even the town walls unsafe. The expense of repair was constant, and hence, perhaps, the poverty of the Church. The promise to him that overcometh, that he shall be made a pillar (immovable and colossal) in God's temple, may be in contrast to the instability of the city, so often shaken.

(2) The description of the Saviour. In looking at this, which is again allied with ch. i. (v. 18), it is impossible to pass over the reference to Isa. xxii. 22, where "the key of the house of David" is laid upon the shoulders of the faithful Eliakim, so that "he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open." "The key" signifies the power of the keys, therefore it is placed upon his shoulder, and not given into his hand. The power of the keys consisted not only in the supervision of the royal chambers, but also in the decision who was and who was not to be received into the king's service. The key was properly handled by the king, and, therefore, by the steward only in his stead. Christ is the Antitype; He has the key, it is His by right; He who is "the Root and the Offspring of David," He who will use it with absolute justice, for He is holy, and He is true; "holy" as the truly consecrated One, and "true" as being the ideal, the Antitype, fulfilling in Himself all that before had only been typical. If we are to connect the appearance of the Saviour with the need of the Church, we must not pass over the contrast between "Him that is true" and "them of the

¹ Tacitus, "Annals," ii. 47.

synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie." The "house of David" has ever been, and still is, "the Church of God," of which Jesus Christ, a Son over His own house, has the keys. Christ is a personal Saviour, and has a personal knowledge of the inmost heart; He has laid upon the *shoulders* of His priests the *key*. "He hath given power, and commandment, to His Ministers, to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins: He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe His holy Gospel." "Receive the Holy Ghost for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained."¹ But we receive this authority as His servants; all our grace comes to us in union with, and in supply from, the great High Priest; so that every priest, by special call and special bestowal, shares in the priesthood, because he partakes by grace in the priesthood of the Incarnate Son. The supreme power is in His hands, and the key which unlocks the gates of the grave and of death, opens the door of life and of heaven, with an authority which none in heaven would wish to question, and none on earth or hell can ever reverse!

(3) and (4) I shall interweave these again, the more unhesitatingly, because this Church, in beautiful contrast to Sardis, receives unreserved praise. Notice, first, that "have set before thee" is, "have given thee a door opened;" this is one of the gifts which Christ has won for His people: "When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers." The expression is a frequent one in Holy Scripture. "Opened the door of faith to the Gentiles;" "A great door and effectual is opened unto me." I think it well not to confine its meaning to one particular; but to look upon it as signifying that, as where any enclosed place has beauties, enjoyments, blessings, treasures, or interest in it, a closed door prevents us partaking of, or enjoying them, so an open door admits us. In Christ the door is open, alike for Jew and Gentile, the door of mercy, spiritual usefulness, and grace, the door of glory, and the

¹ Book of Common Prayer: The Form and Manner of Ordering of Priests.

door of immortality. "I am the Door : by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture." This involves safety, liberty, and support. Only He who has the key can bestow this gift of the open door. "Thou hast a little power." My Own imparted power, which has enabled thee to "keep My Word," and "confess My Name." Now I will fulfil My promise, "to him that hath shall more be given." Or else (for the Greek may be thus translated), "thou hast little strength." They were poor in goods of this world, and small in number, and this very weakness and poverty led them to be rich in Christ, and strong in Him ; "when I am weak then am I strong ;" "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me." Both explanations are so beautiful that I know not which to prefer. May we not take both, as both are true ?

Notice, next, "Thou didst not deny" (in the aorist), points to another specific instance of faithful confession. "Behold, I will make some of the synagogue of Satan," is, in the Revised Version, "Behold, I give (some out) of the synagogue of Satan . . . which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie ; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." Here is another gift from God, in the conversion of her enemies and Christ's. The promise to the Church in Smyrna, which was also troubled by these Jews, is not so full as this ; there they are simply assured that their opponents shall not prevail ; here, as a gift from God, they are to win some of them over. The reference is to Isa. lx. 14. We should note in the posture assumed a sign of the truth of their conversion, in that they are willing to take the lowest place. Ignatius, in his epistle to the Philadelphians, thus writes, "If any one shall preach the Jewish law unto you, hearken not unto him ; for it is better to receive the doctrine of Christ from one that has been circumcised, than Judaism from one that has not." "Because thou didst keep," etc. Patience is an absolute essential of the Word of Christ ; the plodding on under all trial, the remaining faithful under all opposition and temptation ; it is one of the graces all Christians need ; patient possession of their souls, patient continuance in well-doing, patient waiting for Christ, patience in tribulation. The reward is in kind : "Thou hast kept," "I will keep thee." Not "from," but

"out of" the hour of trial, which, spread over all the inhabited world, is to try "those that dwell upon the earth," those that "have their portion here," "of the earth, earthy." "They that dwell on the earth," take their place in our glossary then, with "the tribes of the earth" (compare St. Matt. xxiv. 21 and 30). The faithful, on the other hand, are looked upon as already removed from this earthly sphere, for God sees the end, "looks at us not as we are, but as we are becoming;" "our citizenship is in heaven." In "the city of my God," referred to in the promise below, they are out of all tribulation.

(5) The exhortation. This is again allied with the declaration of Christ's coming, and now "coming quickly." Compare "when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh" (St. Luke xxi. 28). The warning to the impenitent is, at the same time, an encouragement to patience: "Yet a little, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." It would be well for each of us to set apart at least one day in each week, to pray for perseverance; and on the same day to offer up the kindred prayer for patience. All need this, but none more than they who have to work amidst uncongenial surroundings. "In your patience ye shall win your souls" (St. Luke xxi. 19). As the beleaguered city is nerved to new effort of patient defence when the flashes of the heliograph signal the welcome news of speedy relief, so they and we are still to hold fast "the word of Christ's patience," still to go on suffering, keeping Christ's word, and confessing His Name; for to win the crown we must go on *unto the end*. Isolation, and want of sympathy, seem to be two of the special trials of those who try to teach, and live out, Church principles in our own city; we can only bow our heads at many of God's dispensations, and go on patiently testifying and enduring, not yielding a jot or tittle of God's truth; like Philadelphia, weak, yet strong!

(6) The call to hear.

(7) The promise "to him that overcometh." Pillars of temples were, as many of us will have noticed, carved in human shape. Now, in the heavenly Jerusalem there is no literal temple; "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." Here, then, is a beautiful picture of the faithful one, who dies in grace, "departing this life in

Christ's faith and fear." He is still "a very member incorporate" in the body of the Son of God, giving his share of beauty to the whole, just in proportion as the Divine carver's patient hand has been at work upon him, and then himself personally assured of stability and permanence. "The pillar is part of the structure, and when it is once set in its place, it is to be there as long as the temple stands" (Bishop Phillips Brooks, "Candle of the Lord," p. 64). It was a stone outside once, no better than any other, then wrought out of the quarry, and then sawn and chiselled into shape, and then graven and pierced, and fretted into beauty, till it stands one of the crowning glories of the building, safe from all possibility of going out again, either to persecution, temptation, or fall. "Who," says St. Augustine, "would not yearn for that city out of which no friend departs, and into which no enemy enters?"

But there is more than this. "I will write upon him" (not upon "the pillar") a threefold name. (a) "The Name of My God;" as the golden plate on the high priest's forehead bore Jehovah's Name, "Holiness to the Lord," so the saints who have carried His cross upon their foreheads now have "God's Name" written there. (b) "The name of the city of My God," etc., clearly indicating its spiritual character, of which we shall hear more at the close of the book. "Our citizenship is in heaven" even now, then it will be so in glad perfection. I would connect this thought with the appearance of the Saviour; as He is "true," so this is the true Jerusalem, the ideal, the perfect, the "Jerusalem which is above." (c) "Mine own new Name;" the Name of "Him who is holy;" so that we have the perfect fulfilment of our baptismal incorporation, "into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Notice the three expressions, God the Father's Name, the Saviour's own Name (for it is He who is speaking); then "the name of the city of My God," the city which is built of living stones, brought to perfection by the work of the Holy Spirit.

Our hope is like that of Philadelphia, if we are, in the realization of our own weakness, strong in Christ; in the realization of our own ignorance, wise in Christ; if we are keeping God's word, and if we are confessing His Name. It is the consummation of all our hopes; enough surely to stir us up to new-found energy, enough to brighten

us in days of despondency, enough to fill us with a sense of the *nobility* of this life's struggle against sin, the world, the flesh, and the devil ; enough to stamp indelibly upon our hearts the reality of God's rewards, as against the temporary and fleeting bestowals of this world ; enough to send us forth, with God's battle-cry fresh upon our lips, "For God and His Church !" No compromise ! none with open enemies ! and none with false friends ! We, too, have an *opened* door ; the world may frown, and oppose, and slight, but it is all in vain ; no one can shut the door by which we enter upon that which is better than any earthly reward.

INSTRUCTION X.

CHAPTER iii. 14-22.

|| Or, in
Laodi-
cea.

14 And unto the Angel of the Church || of the Laodiceans write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God:

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot, I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth:

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

* Prov.

3. 11.

Heb. 12.

5.

19 *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore, and repent.

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21 To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

14 And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write;

These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of

15 God: I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou

16 wert cold or hot. So because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee

17 out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind

18 and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eyesalve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest

19 see. As many as I love, I reprove and chasten: be zealous therefore, and

20 repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21 He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

22 sat down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

(1) THE epistle to Laodicea. There were no fewer than four places of this name. This one was about forty miles from Ephesus. Under the Romans it was a place of some importance, with a considerable trade, especially in money exchange, and with corresponding wealth. It was in south-western Phrygia. It was founded by Antiochus Theos, and received its name from his wife Laodice (third century B.C.). An epistle was written to the Church by St. Paul, at the same time that he wrote to Colosse. Archippus, the bishop, is particularly warned: "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it."¹ An inscription describes it as "the most splendid city of Asia." Pride and luxury were its evident snares. Tacitus, in his "Annals" (xiv. 27), tells us that it was destroyed A.D. 60 by an earthquake. The same historian adds that the city recovered itself by its own wealth, and without extraneous assistance—a very interesting commentary, from such a source, upon her boast that she "was rich, and had gotten riches, and had need of nothing." Her subsequent Church history was remarkable for its vacillation, now favouring heresy, and now condemning it.

(2) The aspect of the Saviour. This is taken partly from the description in ch. i., where, in v. 5, He is called "the faithful Witness," but the rest is new. The epithets "faithful and true" are meant to fulfil all our conceptions of an ideal witness. "Amen" will be recognized, under its translation "verily," as the preface to so many of our Lord's declarations, especially in St. John's Gospel, where it is duplicated. Notice also, "He that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of Amen" (Isa. lxxv. 16), and that the name there given to God is applied to God's promises in 2 Cor. i. 20. But I prefer to look upon it as the response of the whole life and death of our blessed Lord, as Son of man, to the truth, the righteousness, and the will of Almighty God. "Amen," "So be it." The Lord Jesus Christ in His perfect life of atonement, as well as in His perfect death, in His every thought, word,

¹ Col. iv. 17.

and deed, was the loud "Amen" in behalf of humanity to the mind and will of God. He was Himself humanity's "Amen." This is, to my mind, an essential feature in the Atonement. It is the recognition, by Humanity, of sin from God's point of view. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." "I can of My own self do nothing." This is not a physical, but a moral impossibility: "Not My will, but Thine be done," standing out thus in striking contrast to the vacillation of this unhappy Church. If this view is correct, "the beginning of the creation of God" will not simply mean "the Originator of all creation" (it is in no case the first creature, for He was "not made"), but the beginning of that new-born race which has its life in Him. "Christ the firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ's, at His coming." So, as already noticed, the gospel has been beautifully defined as "God's life in Christ coming into our life and making it new." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation."

(3) and (4) Spiritual condition — "neither cold nor hot," with corresponding censure. Notice the expression, "I would thou wert cold or hot." How can Christ wish that she should be cold? "Hot" we can understand; it is the condition of the zealous man (ζέω, I boil), "the boiling one." He who writes the message is himself "Boanerges, the son of thunder." Compare Apollos, "fervent in the spirit;" and, again, the words of the disciples at Emmaus, "Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" "Cold" would thus seem to be the condition of one who had never been warmed by grace, or one who had never had any Divine love kindled in the heart, such as a heathen. This, though a sad condition, would be, at least, beter than that of one who had received the grace of God, but in vain, whose heart *remained* lukewarm. It is important to emphasize the word "remained." "It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."¹ Because of this lukewarm condition the threat comes, "I will spew thee out of My mouth." But this is most beautifully united with the counsel given in v. 18, by Him who, "in the midst of wrath, remembereth mercy." The Greek is not in

¹ 2 St. Pet. ii. 21.

the future tense, as in the case of Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, and Sardis, but is a verb of intention, "I purpose to spew thee out of My mouth." Thus it is implied that immediate repentance would avert the execution of the threat. The Church is in a condition all the more dangerous, because she does not realize her need; she has just enough religion to satisfy appearances, and to lull herself into false security. She prides herself upon her worldly opulence; the same spirit of proud independence, resting upon her worldly prosperity, creeps into everything. She is like the rich man who *trusted* in his riches, and could with *difficulty* enter into the kingdom of God. No doubt there was spiritual pride too. (Note the contrast: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;" "Blessed are ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.") This made her blind to her real condition, which was that she was "the wretched one, and an object of pity, and poor and blind and naked." "Miserable" is used in the same sense in which it is employed in the Litany, "deserving the Divine Pity." Notice the two great opposites of temporal riches and spiritual poverty.

(5) Notice, next, the exhortation, for the counsel which follows is most interesting. Christ adapts Himself to each Church, and to this trading city, priding herself upon her commercial prosperity, and upon her cleverness in buying and selling alike in the best market, He says, "Buy of Me." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." The price to pay is "nothing," but all self and self-sufficiency must be put aside. "Gold, fresh burnt, out of the fire," is a metaphor specially suited to a place that made so much by exchange. What is meant is sterling gold, from which all dross has been melted away, to make these poor rich men truly rich with the unsearchable riches of Christ. "White raiment" is another powerful contrast, for Laodicea was famous for the "colour of its fleeces, probably a glossy black, which was much esteemed" (Bishop Lightfoot). It signifies the robe of Christ's righteousness, the wedding garment, not put on, however, as a clean surplice over a sweep, or a pair of white gloves over dirty hands, *i.e.* not simply imputed but imparted also, and thus becoming the *habit* of life: "Let

thy priests be *clothed* with righteousness." "Eye-salve," as a remedy for her blindness, is, of course, to be spiritually understood ; it is still the spiritual gift of Him who restored sight to the physically blind. "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see," might be the cry of every one who has brought himself humbly and honestly to the Christ.

The threat which follows is beautifully softened, as the yearning love speaks ; it is love, moreover, in all the tenderness of personal affection—the same word which our Lord used when He addressed St. Peter the third time. It was not so much the repetition of the question, but the alteration of the form of it, the taking up of his own word, which grieved the apostle. "I rebuke" is "I convince," the same word as in St. John xvi. 8 : "And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." "Chasten" is a word which suggests the moral training and disciplining of the powers of man, under *parental* guidance, the bringing up of a child. This discipline we must expect if we take our proper position as children ; it is all bearable, but only in the light of the love which faithfully sends it, and brings by it afterwards the "peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that have been exercised thereby." Compare the promised "fruit of righteousness" with the "white raiment." Bengel says, "The Chastiser demonstrates that He has acted faithfully : the chastised one acknowledges this and is thankful : thence peace !" Because of this, "be zealous," "and repent." The zeal, it is implied, is to be continuous, and the repentance to be a decisive act, thus repairing the very quality in which she was wanting, her lukewarmness. To emphasize the need, Christ declares Himself not as "coming," nor "coming as a thief," nor "coming quickly," as before, but as being so near that nothing nearer, short of actual coming, is possible. He is "at the door and knocking." This does not do away with other beautiful explanations, nor with the allusion, so strikingly appropriate, to a lukewarm Church : "I rose up to open to my Beloved ; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. I opened to my Beloved ; but my Beloved had withdrawn Himself, and was gone : my soul failed when He spake : I sought Him, but I could not find Him ; I called

Him, but He gave me no answer" (Song of Solomon v. 5, 6). Yet, again, the door, the closed door, is a metaphor for the obdurate sinner's heart. It is barred by unbelief, by unsanctified ambition, by lust, by selfishness, by vanity, by love of the world, by self-righteousness, by the spirit which is too proud to repair to Christ. At this door Christ, all-patient, stands knocking, by providences, by mercies, by warnings, by chastenings, by Christian education, by His sacraments, by His Word, by parents' prayers, by friends, by conscience, by affliction, by joy, and by many another kind of call. He is very near to us in all these things, and very ready to bless us in them. But two things are necessary on our part: (a) "the hearing ear," like Lydia had, "whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul"—the hearing ear to the *voice* of Jesus as well as to His knock; and then (b) the opening of the door: the unbar-ring and unbolting of the heart, the giving up of pride and vanity and self-righteousness, and all that is opposed to Him, that Christ may come in and make all things new. If this is done, the heart is prepared for the next promise, "I will sup with him, and he with Me," as the disciples did with Jesus in the record in St. John i. 39. "Sup with Him," as we do in that sacred feast, in which He is the "very Paschal Lamb," when "we are one with Him, and He one with us;" "sup with Him," as we shall, if only we are faithful to the end, at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

(6) The call to hear.

(7) The promise to him that overcometh. This seems to stand in the highest possible contrast with the opening menace. The Church was in near danger of rejection, yet before her lay, by the grace of God, a share in Christ's throne, not a session on a separate one: "Father, that which Thou hast given Me, I will that where I am, they also may be with Me, that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me." It is a promise greater than any yet given, though announced to the least-promising Church of all; but it is thought by some to be a sort of climax to the promises hitherto given, and therefore not held out to one Church only, but to all faithful Christians in all time. It will be found well to try and bring out this general teaching of the seven epistles in another instruction. Notice, however, that this throne is that of

the triumphant King, who Himself has overcome by His perfect life and perfect death: "thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." I would impress two principal lessons emphasized by the revelation of Christ as "the faithful and true Witness."

(a) The absolute certainty that all that God has said will come to pass. Sin will and must ever bring its own hell of misery. Wrong will one day be finally and eternally defeated, and Right triumphant; the world's maxims and its boasted advanced thought will be seen to be merely retrograde movements, and the old path of humility, faith, prayer, and communion with God, the right one. If awful potentiality for evil lies resident in every heart, without the grace of God, splendid possibilities, right up to the throne of God, lie, by the help of Divine grace, within the reach of the weakest.

(b) Let me warn you all against that sort of religion, which is just enough to satisfy appearances, and is not an inward reality. Indifference is one of the dangers to which well-to-do people are most exposed. Such do not often actively oppose religion, for it is decent to conform to it: they are not icy cold as they who have never heard God's message; "But," they seem too often to say, "why need we be hot or zealous about it? we have everything that we can want." So it comes to pass that as we often come across a "poor man making many rich, and another, having nothing, and yet possessing all things," so we meet many a rich man who is, as far as God's kingdom is concerned, "the wretched one, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." God, by the mouth of His Son Jesus Christ, has uttered a special message for the rich, and the well-to-do; it is this: "The poor ye have always with you, and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good." "Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee?" And the King, with whom, on His throne, they are about to sit, shall answer and say unto them, "Verily" ("Amen") "I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

INSTRUCTION XI.

WE have now considered the addresses to each of the seven Churches, but I have constantly called your attention to the important suggestion that these epistles are not written to them only, nor do the warnings and promises apply to them only. To the whole Church of Christ are they written, and they are meant to come home collectively and individually to us all, with all the force with which they first issued from the Apostle's inspired pen. Christ's history must be, in counterpart, the history of His Church; she must be identified with His fortunes, and expect to be as her Lord, making acquaintance, as He did, with temptation and conflict, with scorn and opposition, ay, even with the cross; but the glory which shall follow is held out as a bright hope and source of encouragement, patience, and perseverance, even as He, "for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, and despised the shame." It does not follow that our trials will be identically of the same nature and character as those portrayed in these epistles; we shall not, in our own experience, fill in all the minute details; but in the general outlines we shall see our danger, our duty, and our hope. We may be spared many things which earlier Christians have had to face. But we have, on the other hand, to face many trials which they were spared. Every age has been marked with some special features of trial. I do not think that those which we have to face to-day are by any means the least or the least dangerous. The general characteristics of all the Churches find expression to-day: Ephesus, with her declining love; Smyrna, with her suffering faithfulness; Pergamum, with similar fidelity, under even worse persecution, and exposure to the influences of a dangerous sect. Thyatira, with her false teachers, and yet with progress in spite of them; Sardis, renowned for vitality, though dead, and yet with the few who had not defiled their garments; Philadelphia, strong in Christ, strong in her

very weakness, patient and sincere ; Laodicea, lukewarm and conformed to the world. These, and such as these, have not only been characteristic of every age of the Church, but must have been noticed by us, if we are thoughtful observers of outside life, or introspective students of our own condition, in the constant vicissitudes of our own experience.

Professor Milligan's claim for the division of the seven Churches into two groups has much to be said for it, and is certainly full of thought. It is suggested that they are groups of three and four ; the first three and the last four. The first three set forth the Church and ourselves, with our dangers and temptations from *within* ; the last four the Church as she, necessarily, mingles with the world, and so emphasizing our dangers and temptations from *without*, and our duty in regard to them.

(1) Loss of first love ; and yet works, and toil, and patience, and careful testing of doctrine, as in Ephesus.

(2) Faithfulness under suffering, as in Smyrna.

(3) Endurance under persecution, and faithfulness, as a whole, even though some within are going wrong, as in Pergamos.

These set forth the Church in herself, apart from the world ; while

(4) The Church herself (not merely some within her) is seen unsound in doctrine, and tolerating evil, as in Thyatira.

(5) A state of things even worse, a mere name to live, as in Sardis.

(6) A faithful struggle with opposing forces, as in Philadelphia.

(7) A sad and terrible conformity to the world, as in Laodicea. These seem to exhibit the Church in her relations with the world, either nobly faithful, or yielding to its corrupting influences.

The lesson is one which to ourselves, therefore, naturally divides itself into two parts :—

(a) Our own Church and our own self as before God, without reference, except indirectly, to the world. We each know our own trial, and each have our own place to fill ; we each live either for the strength or the weakness of the Church. We know what suffering is, and strong temptation, and persecution, if not from persons, at least from the devil and the powers of darkness. Now, what "the Spirit saith unto the Churches," He says to us. We

might sum up His message thus: "Be faithful, be faithful especially in that inner life, which is open only to God, the life of the heart, the life of thought, the secret life between yourself and your Father in heaven."

Just in proportion as each one of us is being sanctified, so will grow the holiness of the Church; just in proportion as each one of us is faithful, so will the Church be.

(b) The Church and ourselves in relation to the world. If we may judge of others by our own surroundings, I should say that one of our most subtle dangers was compromise, not simply between Catholic truth and sectarian error, but between Christianity and the world. I would rather see the line of demarcation kept clear, distinct, and definite, than I would see such compromises as are indicated by Sunday secular lectures, and even "pleasant Sunday afternoons." I am in favour of everything which can tend to educate and elevate the masses (as they are called); but, with the ample time that working men may get nowadays in the week, there is, in my judgment, no excuse for keeping them from the House of God, and from Divine worship, by lectures, which, however intellectually and scientifically desirable, are not services of worship. I dare say I shall be condemned as very bigoted and narrow-minded. No doubt they who, in the seven Churches, spoke out against existing wrong, were thought so too; but, for all that, let *us* be either cold or hot, one thing or the other, not trimming our sails to catch the favouring breezes of ephemeral popularity; not as weather-cocks, which will point the beak to-morrow where they have the tail to-day; but as compass needles, that point ever faithfully to the pole because magnetized—magnetized by the love of Jesus Christ, His life, His death, His present work, His sacramental grace, His Church, His day!

In speaking of the promise assured "to him that overcometh," it seems impossible to pass over Archbishop Trench's interesting comment that "the order of the promises corresponds to the unfolding of the kingdom of God from its beginning on earth to its consummation in heaven." (1) To the faithful at Ephesus, the tree of life in the paradise of God, corresponding with Gen. ii. (2) "Sin has entered into the world, and death by sin." To the faithful in Smyrna it is promised that they shall not be hurt of "the second death." (3) The promise of the

hidden Manna to Pergamum, answers to the Mosaic period, the Church in the wilderness. (4) That to Thyatira, "Triumph over the nations," consummates the kingdom, and answers to the prophetic types of David and Solomon. (5) Christ promises to the faithful one in Sardis not to blot out his name from the book of life, but to confess him before His Father and the angels at the last day, and clothe him with a glorified body of dazzling whiteness. (6) To those at Philadelphia that they shall be citizens, fixed as immovable pillars, in the New Jerusalem. In these two we see not only individual salvation promised, but privileges in the blessed communion of the Church triumphant. (7) Lastly, to the faithful in Laodicea is given the crowning promise—a seat with Christ in His throne, even as He sits with His Father on His throne. The archbishop goes on to compare these promises with the Paradiso of Dante, with its different circles of light around the throne increasing in brightness, till at last the throne and the presence of Him who sits thereon is reached. An objection to this view is that the faithful in Laodicea would seem to receive a higher reward than those in Ephesus; so that, if we adopt it, we must not isolate the promises, but must put them all together as that which God has in store for "him that overcometh." "He that overcometh shall inherit *all things*."

It will, I think, be enough for us to note the several points wherein *our* faithfulness will be tested, and our triumph lie. Unswerving adherence to the faith, even though suffering and persecution be our lot for it; corresponding rejection of evil; patient labour and endurance; careful keeping of ourselves in personal purity; prayer, watchfulness, and repentance; no compromise with the world, "the human society organizing itself apart from God;" and all in the spirit of love, kept warm and bright by constant touch with Christ Himself. So will all tend to His glory; so will our great guiding principle be more and more established—"He must increase, I must decrease." So shall He who gives us such bright and blessed promises in the overcoming, have all the glory of the conquest—"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

INSTRUCTION XII.

CHAPTER iv. 1-8.

4 After this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard, was as it were of a trumpet, talking with me, which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and behold, a Throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the Throne.

3 And he that sat was to look upon like a Jasper, and a Sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the Throne, in sight like unto an Emerald.

4 And round about the Throne were four and twenty seats, and upon the seats I saw four and twenty Elders sitting, clothed in white raiment, and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

5 And out of the Throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the Throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

6 And before the Throne there was a sea of glass like unto Crystal: and in the midst of the Throne, and round about the Throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

7 And the first beast was like a Lion, and the second beast like a Calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying Eagle.

8 And the four beasts had

4 After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard, *a voice* as of a trumpet speaking with me, one saying, Come up hither, and I will shew thee the things which must ¹come to pass

2 hereafter. Straightway I was in the Spirit: and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and one sitting upon the 3 throne; and he that sat *was* to look upon like a jasper stone and a sardius: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, like an emerald

4 to look upon. And round about the throne *were* four and twenty thrones: and upon the thrones *I saw* four and twenty elders sitting, arrayed in white garments; and on their heads crowns of

5 gold. And out of the throne proceed lightnings and voices and thunders. And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

6 and before the throne, as it were a glassy sea like unto crystal; and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, four living creatures full of eyes

7 before and behind. And the first creature *was* like a lion, and the second

¹ Or, come to pass. After these things straightway, &c.

† *Gr. they have no rest.*

* Is. 6. 3.

each of them six wings about him, and they were full of eyes within, and † they rest not day and night, saying, * Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face as of a man, and the fourth creature *was* like 8 a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, having each one of them six wings, are full of eyes round about and within: and they have no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, which was and which is and ¹ which is to come.

¹ Or, which cometh.

WE now come to the more distinctly prophetic part of this great book. But even yet we have hardly reached the main subject. It is suggested that we have in chs. iv. and v. an introduction to a new section, as in ch. i. we have a preface to the seven epistles. By far the most important point, however, is this: that we have in ch. iv. a magnificent description of the *Triune God*, in all His majesty, purity, and holiness, the object of the worship, homage, and adoration of the whole Church and creation; while in ch. v. we have the introduction of the blessed *redeeming work* of the *Lord Jesus*, and the worship (note this especially) of the *Lamb*, in whose Person humanity is raised to God. Ch. iv. is thus a perfect picture of the inherent glory of the *Triune God*. Ch. v. a picture of the same God, allied with His ransomed Church by the work of the *Lamb*.

It is not difficult to understand why this should be set forth here, for the Church has so much, in the way of suffering and trial, to undergo, that it is only in the view of that which lies before her in the future that she can endure, and hold fast, and persevere. "It is enough for her that she be as her Master." So she, for the "joy that is set before her, must endure the cross, and despise the shame," seeing that the end of her warfare and tribulation is at the very throne of God.

The revelation of this glory is vouchsafed to St. John after he has received and written the epistles to the seven Churches. He then looks, and sees an opened door. This clearly serves a double purpose. Through it the voice "as of a trumpet" reaches his ears, and through it he can

see the vision of the excellent glory. Here is a distinct step in advance of anything we have had before, setting before us realities, and not shadows, the "heavenly things themselves," and not merely their patterns. In the Old Testament we have had (see also Heb. ix. *passim*)—

(a) The tabernacle. *Here* heaven itself.

(b) In the tabernacle, its furniture. The candlestick, with its three branches on either side, making, with its central socket, seven in all. *Here* its reality, "Seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God."

(c) In the Holy of Holies, the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat. *Here* the four living creatures.

(d) Both in the tabernacle and the temple, that visible symbol of the Divine glory, which was called the "shekinah." *Here* the Triune God Himself.

(e) In the temple, the great laver, or molten sea, capable, according to 2 Chronicles and Josephus, of holding twenty-four thousand gallons, used for the personal ablutions of the priests (2 Chron. iv. 6). *Here* "a sea of glass like unto crystal."

(f) (to trespass upon ch. v., while we are upon this point) Under the old dispensation, the victim slain, not *in the Holy of Holies*, but outside, and then its blood brought into the Holy of Holies, the presence-chamber of God, sprinkled by the high priest on the mercy-seat, presented and pleaded there. *Here* the perfect and true Victim, who appears still as "a Lamb standing as though it had been slain," slain outside, on Calvary, its precious blood brought in, and now presented and pleaded, in all its saving power, by the great High Priest, Jesus, the Son of God, who has passed into the heavens, "Himself the Victim, and Himself the Priest."

The voice which speaks is, as it was before, a voice "as of a trumpet." It invites the apostle to "come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must come to pass." The statement, "immediately I was in the Spirit," seems to be the answer to this invitation; his inner spirit was taken possession of by God, and he was thus enabled to see and understand. It seems best to put "hereafter," which is simply "after these things," with the second verse, and to read, "After these things I was immediately

in the Spirit." He sees a throne situated in heaven, and One sitting upon it. That "One" is God, the One living and true God, in His absolute Being, the Triune Deity, to whom, (strongly justifying this interpretation,) the *ter-sanctus* is subsequently addressed. There need be no difficulty in the mention of the other Persons of the Holy Trinity (as we call them) afterwards; the revelation of the Father, which is the work of the Incarnate Son, by the Holy Spirit, is, as far as regards the order of this book, still in the future; so God is seen, first of all, in His absolute and inherent Being.

The Divine appearance is described as being "like a jasper stone and a sardius," while round about the throne is an iris, "in sight like unto an emerald;" the sardius is the first, and the jasper the last stone in the breast-plate of judgment, while both are mentioned in Ezek. xxviii.; they are found also in ch. xxi., among the precious stones which garnish the foundations of the wall of the city. The sardius is, probably, that which we call nowadays a carnelian, while the jasper is described in ch. xxi. as "clear as crystal." If these stones are symbolical, the latter would represent the purity of God, and the former the fire by which He is, mercifully, to destroy all sin; we connect the Pentecostal work with these colours still, the "cloven tongues like as of fire" with the red, and the cleansing and purifying result of the Holy Spirit's work, with the white. Then the bow, which is not in a segment, as we see it, but *all round the throne*, as a halo, is God's encircling grace, the bow being, from the time of the Flood, the token of God's covenant, while green, the colour of the emerald, is that upon which, of all others, the eye can rest without fatigue. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." As the prismatic colours unite to form the pure light, so some of His attributes are comparatively dark, His inflexible justice, His absolute holiness, and so on; others are bright, such as His full and free forgiveness, and boundless mercy; but all unite to form the sweet harmony of love; it is this love upon which the human heart, with all its trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, adversity, temptation, and sin, can rest in Jesus Christ.

The supreme thought, for our personal help, is that this all-holy Being, with His ineffable majesty and glory, is

the covenant-keeping God. Round about the throne are four and twenty elders sitting also upon *thrones*; this is the perfected Church of the old and new covenants, as it is seen from eternity in the mind, and will, and plan of God. They are robed in priestly robes, and crowned as kings. Out of the throne proceed, as at Sinai, lightnings, and thunders, and voices, for though God is indeed the covenant God, part of that very covenant is that His mind is unaltered and unalterable towards sin. He is still "a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; *and that will by no means clear the guilty.*" Condemnation of sin is an essential part of perfect love; but it is here seen as an attribute of God rather than in active exercise. So the One Eternal Spirit is seen in His characteristic operations already noticed; all these are directed towards the riddance of sin from His people's hearts. Wisdom and understanding, counsel and spiritual strength, knowledge and true godliness, and holy fear, are the seven-fold gifts to us from Him who is the perfection of all and each Himself. What is the sea of glass, clear as crystal? Perhaps, primarily, the other side of "the floor of heaven,"¹ but in any case, beautifully symbolical of the haven of rest. The soul, baptized in the laver of regeneration, as the priests were washed in the water of the molten sea, has come triumphantly over the waves and billows of this troublesome world, and is in perfect peace. All this from God's point of view, who "sees the end from the beginning," who (to repeat a quotation), "sees us not as we are, but as we are becoming." "The Lord sitteth above the water-flood; the Lord remaineth a King for ever; the Lord shall give strength unto His people; the Lord shall give His people the blessing of peace."

We come now to the four "living creatures," for "beasts" is a most unhappy translation. They are in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, just as the cherubim of glory, in the Holy of Holies, were above the mercy-seat. Notice that they each have six wings, like the seraphim in Isa. vi. Those have two for adoration, two for meditation, two for work; these resemble the description in Ezek. i., only that there each living

¹ See *Merchant of Venice*, act v. sc. 1.

creature has four faces, while here each has but one. These living beings are "full of eyes round about and within," i.e. "round about and within" the wings, seeing in all directions, that they may the more perfectly fulfil the Divine behests. The Fathers associated them with the four Gospels, exhibiting severally the royalty of the lion, the patient endurance of the ox, the human sympathy of the man, and the soaring majesty of the eagle. Others see in them the four representative heads of the animal creation—wild beasts, tame beasts, human beings, and birds. "We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now . . . waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." The kingdom of Christ is described as one in which "the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together," etc., etc.; so it seems well to combine the two thoughts, and see here (again from the point of view of Him who sees the end from the beginning), the symbol of the whole of the ransomed creation joining in the act of perfect worship, with their perfected attributes, the assemblage of all created life, for "the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." But it would not be right to pass over the fact that a human attribute is the property of each, laid at the feet of Him who first bestowed it, and placed at His service.

The consideration of the rest of the chapter, we must, for want of time, defer to another Instruction. That which we see here, God in His triune, absolute glory, worshipped and adored by "everything that hath breath," should prompt us to the most earnest cultivation of *reverence* and *worship*, the "giving God the honour due unto His Name."

Worship is the recognition of the *worth* of the object to whom we pay reverence. How infinitely below its exalted heights must any conception of ours be of the worth of God! We are so often filled with such a deep sense of our need, with the contrast between ourselves and Him, that our more frequent feeling in church, or in our chamber, is the yearning to *obtain* grace, supply, comfort, pardon, strength, wisdom, help. But *obtaining* the object of our desire, however precious, and pure, and spiritual, can never, and must never do away with the

duty of *giving*, of *worshipping*. “Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.” Our own personal tribute may be, at its best, a poor and feeble one, like the smallest pipe in our beautiful organ; yet that little pipe, out of tune, would create a discord. Our tribute may at least be in harmony with the whole voice of creation—

“Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honour and the power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they were, and were created.”

INSTRUCTION XIII.

CHAPTER IV. 9 TO END.

* ch. 5.
12.

9 And when those beasts give glory, and honour, and thanks to him that sat on the Throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

10 The four and twenty Elders fall down before him that sat on the Throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the Throne, saying,

11 *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.

9 And when the living creatures shall give glory and honour and thanks to him that sitteth on the throne, to him that liveth ¹for ever and ever,

10 the four and twenty elders shall fall down before him that sitteth on the throne, and shall worship him that liveth ¹for ever and ever, and shall cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 ing, Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honour and the power: for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created.

¹ Gr.
unto the
ages of
the ages.

THE Triune God, in His absolute glory, receiving the worship and adoration of His creatures, is, as we have seen, the theme of this chapter. We now come to the description of the adoration itself. First, that of the living beings: "They have no need of rest, for *there* is no fatigue," work and worship without fatigue being the ideal of a happy and holy life. "In this world, rest becomes irksome if there be no labour, and labour becomes painful if there be no rest, and creation seems, all with one consent, to long after a condition where it would be possible to carry on a perpetual labour with a continual rest" (Rev. J. Vaughan, "Sermons," vol. ix. p. 115). The unceasing song of the celestial worshippers goes forth in its triple ascription of threefold holiness to the Triune God in His three eternities of being—the eternal past, the eternal present, and the eternal future, which was, and is, and is to come. The song is in harmony with the revelation of God in His absolute glory, and its theme is rather creation than

redemption ; this is brought out strikingly below in the fact that the four living creatures break into their anthem before the representatives of the Church. It seems impossible to separate this scene from that so graphically depicted in Isa. vi., where the use of the six wings is thus set forth : " With twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly." This passage is full of teaching if we apply it to ourselves as joining in the worship of Jehovah, for the six wings are not all for *active* work ; two are for self-abasement, two for self-examination and caution as to our ways, two for work : " with twain he did fly," ready at any moment to speed on the wings of love to do the will and the work of the King. It becomes thus a pattern of a true life of worship : " We bless Thee for our creation . . . and we beseech Thee, give us that due sense of all Thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we show forth Thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives." That only is a true life of worship in which self-abasement and self-examination find their due proportion with active work, each with the others is true worship, neither is true worship without the others. It is a trinity of service ! There is always danger, especially in this busy age, of destroying this proportion ; our active work particularly may become so all-engrossing, that our souls shall seldom or never be " alone with God ;" we may busy ourselves so much about others, that our own spiritual life may be neglected, and the constant bustle and rush of life may encroach, little by little, slowly perhaps, but all too surely, upon habits of prayer and self-culture, and quiet moments with God. We must ourselves be drawing out of the fulness of God, ourselves be drinking deep draughts of the perennial stream which flows from the smitten " Rock of Ages," ourselves be moved by the Holy Ghost, before we can do successful spiritual work for others. God's great work in our own hearts and our great preparation for work for others, is done as we " commune with our own heart, and in our chamber, and are *still*." So, too, a constant recognition of our own unworthiness will form, if we want to be kept humble, an essential part of our life of worship ; the order of all real growth in spiritual things is out of self and into Christ ; all the doors of a man's life which lead into the sanctuary of the Most High, open

outwards—out of self, out of meanness, out of wrong. “He must increase, I must decrease.”

You will have noticed that in the Revised Version, the future tense is used in vs. 9 and 10: “When the living creatures *shall* give . . . the four and twenty elders *shall* fall down, . . . *shall* worship, . . . *shall*,” etc., emphasizing the eternity of the act. It may be used, too, because we are now dealing with the awakened response of the whole Church of Christ, which is dependent upon the redeeming work, with which the next chapter deals, and which is thus viewed as yet future. The four and twenty elders represent, as we have seen, the Old and New Testament Churches. They are seen united in the mind of God; the Jews, His first chosen people, are to be fully restored, when “the fulness of the Gentiles is come in;” so we now see that “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all;” they unite in the adoration, with a threefold act which corresponds with the *ter-sanctus*, they fall down, they worship, they cast their crowns (crowns of victory) before the throne, with yet again a threefold offering of adoration, “Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honour and the power.” Notice carefully the difference between the adoration of the elders and that of the living creatures; here the personal pronoun “our” is introduced—“our” Lord, “our” God, “known to be ours” by the blessed revelation of His Son “our” Lord. “We have known and believed the love that God hath to us;” “No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.” Then, very strikingly, while the living creatures shall give glory, and honour, and thanks, the worship of the twenty-four elders acknowledges that glory, honour, and *power* are His due. Notice that in ch. i. 6, “dominion” (*κράτος*) is ascribed to Christ. In ch. v. 12 and vii. 12, “might” (*ἰσχύς*), here “power” (*δύναμις*). God has all power in heaven (xv. 8), but the *world* is not yet seen as brought into subjection to the Divine power, and so we read of the ascription of *power* here and elsewhere as due to Him on earth (v. 12, vii. 12, xii. 10, xix. 1). In ch. xi. 17 He is represented as having taken that power (Arch-deacon Lee). Nor must we pass over the fact that the definite article is used—*the* glory, *the* honour, *the* power, absolute in each case, as due to the Triune God in His

absolute glory. The "Thou" in the last clause is emphatic : "Thou didst create [because creation is here the theme of the song] all things," the universe, and "because of Thy will," because it pleased Thee, they "were existing" (as contrasted with their non-existence before). God said, "Let there be light, and there was light;" for with Him to will is to effect. "And were created;" this is in the aorist, implying a definite act at a definite time; Professor Milligan thinks that "they were" implies that their type existed in the Divine mind before they were called into actual being.

Yet again, we, as loving Churchmen and communicants, shall not fail to notice that *we* take up this song at every celebration of the Holy Communion, the highest earthly act of worship and thanksgiving, as the basis of our adoration : "With angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name; evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory : Glory be to Thee, O Lord Most High." May all we have *seen* of the worship of heaven intensify our worship here on earth !

In the next chapter we shall see that the redeeming work of *our blessed Lord*, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," is the chief theme ; the whole of God's creation, including the ransomed Church, has been seen giving Him the honour due unto His Name, and worshipping Him with holy worship. We are next to note *how* the great work of re-union with God has been accomplished, and to see the revelation of the majesty and glory of Jesus Christ, in the presence of the hosts of heaven. "*All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth.*" Thus, two scenes are before the Church, preparatory to the great trouble which is to come upon her before her final triumphs. This chapter deals with "our God," her God, with all His Divine love and power ; the next with "our Saviour," her Saviour, with all His human love and power and sympathy, in every instance perfect. We are now to see Him who lived His life under the same conditions of suffering which are our appointed lot, and thus attained to the perfection of sympathy. No one can feel sympathy in its fulness, unless he has gone through the same experiences as those with whom he sympathizes.

We are about to read of fearful perils and scenes, and

terrible conflict with the powers of darkness, and the god of this world : but we know from this preface what the issue will be, because God is in the midst of her, and Jesus has lived and died, and lives again ! “ God is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be removed ; God shall help her, and that right early.” Let us lay the same truth to heart ; we have our own trials to face, our own warfare to accomplish, our own enemies to do battle with, living and powerful spiritual foes the worst of all ; but Jesus lives ! “ We have not a High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need.”

INSTRUCTION XIV.

CHAPTER V. 1-6.

5 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the Throne, a book written within, and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

2 And I saw a strong Angel proclaiming with a loud voice; Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open, and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5 And one of the Elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, *the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

6 And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the Throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the Elders stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.

5 And I saw ¹in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back, close sealed with seven

2 seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a great voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals

3 thereof? And no one in the heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look thereon.

4 And I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open the book,

5 or to look thereon: and one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome, to open the book and the seven seals

6 thereof. And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the ²seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.

¹ Gr. *on*.

* Gen.
49. 9.

² Some ancient authorities omit *seven*.

WE are now in a position to consider the details of this chapter, which sets forth the blessed Redeemer, and His redeeming work, and shows Him to us as *Redeemer*, sharing in the reception of the adoration of the ransomed Church.

Remember that we are dealing with a revelation, an "unveiling" of a *mystery*. A sealed book, in the form of

a roll, as it was then, is a fitting type of a mystery, for *sealing* implies secrecy, and the seven-fold sealing deepens it. The imagery is familiar to us in Ezek. ii. 9, 10, and in Isa. xxxix. 11; but we must be prepared to find many conjectures both as to the seals themselves, and the revelation which follows upon their opening; some thinking that as each seal is loosed, its contents are disclosed until stopped by the next seal, and so on; but it is important to notice that we are not told that *the book is read*, only that, concurrent with the breaking of each seal, a *vision* is accorded to the beloved disciple. The book itself is only stated subsequently to be entirely unsealed; may we not hope that Jesus, our Redeemer, in whose hand it is left, has yet to read it out when all has come to pass, and when His reign is unquestioned and universal? The roll itself would be sealed to the staff to which it was attached, and, of course, could not, in that case, be read until all the seven seals had been loosed. If we look upon it as containing the blessed title-deeds of man's inheritance, we may read most interestingly Jer. xxxii. 9-14. In any case it will, I think, be safe to conclude that the opening of the seals indicates the various and successive steps by which God, in the work of Christ, clears the way for the ultimate reading of the book. The roll, we must notice, is close sealed, or sealed down, emphasizing its mysterious character, and it is not *in* the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne, but *upon* it; not, therefore, grasped as though to withhold it, but ready for him to take who may be found worthy. In the fact that the roll is written within and on the back, we must recognize the truth that God's purposes are *already complete*; thus we are provided with a great comfort in our personal trials, as well as in those of the Church. "Hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?"

The next step in the revelation is the sight of a *strong* angel proclaiming (as a herald) with a *great* voice. These two attributes are His, because His voice has to reach to all in heaven, earth, and Hades. No one, in any of these places, was able to answer the challenge, for no one was worthy, *i.e.* either morally entitled or competent, either to open the book or to look upon the contents so as to read them. This brought great sorrow to St. John's mind, and copious tears, because he feared the abrupt close of the

revelation which was just opening to his vision. Then one of the elders spake ; no one particular individual is, I think, intended ; some have imagined that St. Matthew is the speaker, because the lion, as an emblem, is assigned to him. But we must remember that that emblem sets forth, not the personal character of the evangelist, but one of the aspects of Christ ; so that it seems best to regard it as the utterance simply of a *representative* of the Church (one *out of* the elders)—that Church, redeemed to God by Christ. The Church, which owes all her conquest and triumph, all her help in the day of trial, and all her overcoming to Him, speaks, by one of its members, and says, “Weep not: behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome, to open the book, and the seven seals thereof.” This description of our blessed Lord is twofold, and the references to Old Testament Scriptures are obvious: (a) Gen. xlix. 9, 10 ; (b) Isa. xi. 1. The address of King David to Solomon in 1 Chron. xxviii. 4 beautifully links together the two thoughts. The lion thus becomes the metaphor of royal power and might. Ch. xxii. 16 points out Christ as the Root from which David sprang, as well as the Branch out of his roots. He spoke of Himself as David’s Son and David’s Lord, and in Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24 He is the true David. There seems a strong concurrence of opinion that the word “overcame” should be taken absolutely, and not connected only with the words “to open ;” His overcoming is the ground of His worthiness to open the book. As He is “Author and Finisher of faith,” so He is Author and Finisher of victory. The declaration of the elder is immediately fulfilled in the vision. The glorious company, we remember, was seen round about the throne ; Christ is not *on* the throne,—this is plain from the next verse ; but He is in the midst of the company, and beautifully so, because He is the one Mediator between God and man. But now notice that St. John had been prepared to behold “the Lion of the tribe of Judah,” and he beholds its most striking opposite, a Lamb!¹ A Lamb, moreover (for the diminutive is used), in its aspect of gentleness, innocence, and endearment. It is the word which St. John himself first heard from the lips of Jesus, addressing St. Peter, “Feed My lambs.” It is not the word used in the first chapter of St.

¹ Professor Milligan.

John's Gospel, "Behold the Lamb of God!" etc.; He is *the* Lamb, and we, His *lambs*, are under His care, as the "good Shepherd." But there can be no doubt that the thought of sacrifice is plainly here, for it is "a Lamb as it had been slain," or rather, "slaughtered," for sacrifice. The expression "standing" is all-important, for it leads us at once to the combination of the two thoughts—

"Offer'd was He for greatest and for least,
Himself the Victim, and Himself the Priest."

(Hymns A. & M., 313.)

Christ is there pleading the memorial of His all-perfect sacrifice, once for all made on Calvary, but ever pleaded within the veil of the true Holy of Holies. The "stigmata" are there, those five sacred marks of the nails and the spear, as eternal tokens of His Passion. Strive to realize that the vision is the vision of a *present fact*; Jesus, as our great High Priest, is, day and night, pleading for you and me, as He stands before the throne. We make this plea our own in a very special and particular sense, when, at each celebration of the Holy Communion, we "do this into His memorial," bringing our "trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, adversity," temptation, and sin, and casting them all into His all-prevailing plea. "He is there in our very humanity, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, the Representative of our race, the God-consecrated Priest, for ever presenting before the Father the *consummated* sacrifice of Calvary. . . . All through the Old Testament the great crucial act of sacrifice is not the slaying of the victim, but the presentation to God of the offering already slain; to 'offer sacrifice' never means, in the Old Testament, only the slaying of the offering chosen, but always implies the bringing of it into the presence of God in definite oblation; . . . so the offering *once slain* upon the cross is continually *offered* in heaven, as shadowed forth in the death and presentation of the victims under the Jewish Law. And what is the effect of this offering? As our great High Priest presents His sacrifice to the Father, He is continually claiming from the Father all the pledged fruits of His obedient life and redeeming death; that which He merited for us on earth, that He now claims for us in heaven. The Eternal Son, as He now presents before the Father the death He once died on Calvary, is claiming for you and me all those graces, in the strength of which

we can rise up from the far country of sin, and enter into our Father's house" (Canon George Body, "Activities of the Ascended Lord," pp. 23 and 25, *et passim*). All that is wrapped up in the word "salvation," Jesus Christ has merited—forgiveness of the guilty past, acceptance and renewal in the living present, perseverance in the future, safety in death, acquittal in judgment, bliss in eternity! And as He presents Himself, "The Lamb as though it had been slaughtered," He is claiming for each one who will shelter himself beneath His all-prevailing intercession, His salvation as the pledged fruit of His redeeming love. In every act of worship, in private and public prayer, but especially at every celebration of the Holy Communion, we can, and should, make this truth our own; kneeling at the foot of His cross, gazing on His intercession, and listening to His absolution, we should trust Him for these very things, and put ourselves and our case, whatever it is, into His hands; trust Him to forgive that guilty past, trust Him to accept and renew in the living present; trust Him to give the persevering grace as long as life shall continue; trust Him to be our Companion in death, to acquit us in judgment, to make us blessed through eternity. This is that "looking" which means salvation; he who *thus* "looks" may appropriate this truth—

"There is life for a look at the Crucified One;
There is life at this moment for thee."

"Once, only once, and once for all,
His precious life He gave;
Before the Cross our spirits fall,
And own it strong to save.

"'One offering, single and complete,'
With lips and heart we say;
But what He never can repeat
He shows forth day by day.

"For, as the priest of Aaron's line
Within the Holiest stood,
And sprinkled all the mercy-shrine
With sacrificial blood;

"So He, Who once atonement wrought,
Our Priest of endless power,
Presents Himself for those He bought
In that dark noontide hour.

“ His Manhood pleads where now It lives
On heaven's eternal Throne,
And where in mystic rite He gives
Its Presence to His own.

“ And so we show Thy death, O Lord,
Till Thou again appear ;
And feel, when we approach Thy Board,
We have an Altar here.

“ All glory to the Father be,
All glory to the Son,
All glory, Holy Ghost, to Thee,
While endless ages run. Amen.”
(Hymns A. & M., 315.)

“ Intercessor, Friend of sinners,
Earth's Redeemer, plead for me,
Where the songs of all the sinless
Sweep across the crystal sea.”
(Hymns A. & M., 316.)

INSTRUCTION XV.

CHAPTER V. 7 TO END.

7 And he came, and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the Throne.

8 And when he had taken the book, the four Beasts, and four and twenty Elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of *Odours*, which are the prayers of Saints.

|| Or,
incense.

9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the Book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation:

* 1 Pet.
2. 9.

10 *And hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests, and we shall reign on the earth.

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many Angels, round about the Throne, and the beasts and the Elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, honour, glory, and

7 And he came, and he ¹taketh it out of the right hand of him that

¹ Gr.
hath
taken.

8 sat on the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

9 And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood *men* of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them *to be* unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the

10 earth. And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a great voice, Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are

power be unto him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty Elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

in them, heard I saying, Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, *be* the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, 14 ¹for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped.

¹ Gr.
unto the
ages of
the ages.

“THE Lamb,” we next notice, is described as having “seven horns and seven eyes ;” these latter are explained, by Holy Writ itself, to be “the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.” The word “sent,” according to the construction of the passage, belongs to the eyes only. The Holy Spirit’s work is necessary to prepare us for the place which Jesus has prepared for us ; so the Holy Spirit is the sevenfold eye of Christ, seeing everything and searching the heart, prompting our hearts to utter the prayer, “Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts,” searching the heart of the individual, as well as ever-mindful, in His providence, of the interests of the Church, and against her foes. Compare Zech. iv. 10 (R.V.), “For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel, even these seven, which are the eyes of the Lord ; they run to and fro through the whole earth.” The same thought is presented in 2 Chron. xvi. 9, “For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him.”

The number “seven” implies, in both cases, perfection, and, in the case of the seven horns, it is especially important to remember this, as the horns, in other places, represent the antichristian world-powers. The seven horns, then, are the sign of *universal* dominion and *absolute* power. Notice the construction of the passage “He came” (for He was found worthy), and (perfect tense) “hath taken,” etc. The perfect tense is used, most strikingly, among the aorists, probably to emphasize the truth that, as He took the book, He keeps it. It is *His own* as the Redeemer of the human race. The result is a glorious outburst of praise. But I think we shall hardly grasp the full beauty of the picture, unless we remember another part of the work and office of the earthly high priest, besides that of sprinkling

the mercy-seat with the blood of the victim slain outside ; there were two altars in the Old Testament dispensation : (a) the altar made of shittim wood, and overlaid with brass, which was the altar of burnt-offering ; and (b) the altar, also made of shittim wood, and overlaid with pure gold, which was the altar of incense. The Books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, large parts of which the ordinary reader might be tempted to pass over, will well repay new and careful study, if we connect the laws and details of worship therein contained, with our Lord Jesus Christ, our risen High Priest, within the Holy of Holies now. In connection with this latter altar God's command (Exod. xxx. 8) was, "When Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations." Our blessed Lord, as the great High Priest, passed into the heavens, is the Antitype of this part of the high priest's work, as He is of the other. When He has taken the book, the four living beings, and the four and twenty elders (representing redeemed creation, and humanity), fall down and include *the Lamb* in their worship, adoration, and homage. (Remember that ch. iv. shows us the Triune God receiving the praises and adoration of the whole of the redeemed creation ; ch. v. shows us Jesus, as the Representative of perfected humanity, receiving similar worship and homage ; this is all-important.) The four and twenty elders have each a harp, or rather a cithara, which, with its six strings, signifies, according to St. Jerome, the six corporal acts of mercy : "I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in ; naked, and ye clothed Me ; I was sick, and ye visited Me ; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me."

Each also has a golden *bowl*, not a vial, but a bowl, or basin, broad and shallow ; these "bowls" were among the gifts of which we read in Numb. vii. as offered by the princes or elders of Israel ; they were used in the service of the tabernacle, and *especially* for offering on the golden altar of the sanctuary the incense which had been kindled by coals from the altar in the court.¹ So the bowls here are full of incense, full of odours, which are revealed to be the "prayers of the saints." The elders have them in their hands, as representatives of the Church. And now it

¹ Professor Milligan, "Lectures on the Apocalypse," p. 54.

becomes most interesting and helpful to notice that the incense, in the type, was forbidden for private use and belonged to God only (Exod. xxx. 37, 38). By the term "saints," we must understand those who are faithful to their *separation*, their setting-apart for Christ, God's faithful people. Then we connect most beautifully the work of the great High Priest in offering incense with the prayers of the saints. Here is the secret of all success in prayer; it is heard, not because of the beauty of its composition, but because it goes up to God through the perfect High Priest, and is associated with His work and offering; every "voice of conscious need breathed out to God," every confession, every petition, made in penitence and faith, is *surely* heard, because of the work of the Lamb, Who, all-worthy, pleads for the all-unworthy! Well may the redeemed sing a new song! Notice the change of tense again, "sing" (present tense), because the worship of heaven is continuous; it was a "new song," when redemption became a completed act; its theme is the absolute "worth" of Christ. "Worship," therefore, in its primary meaning comes first: it "recognizes the worth of Christ;" "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof;" "worthy" as sacrificial Victim slain for man, and as purchasing men "unto God," out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, by His blood; the value of the purchase corresponds to the price paid. Notice the beautiful truth, as it is all through the Bible, of reconciling us to God, and not God to us; for all the fault is on our side. Notice carefully, too, that "by the blood" is rather "in Thy blood," setting forth not only the actual blood shed for us on Calvary, but the *life* in which, and by which, we continuously live. "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." "The blood is the life."

The mention of the four terms, "tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation," sets forth the worldwide characteristics of Christ's work, which embraces all, "circumcision, or uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond, or free." The expression, "And madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests," implies the fulfilment, in the highest sense, of God's design for his chosen and separated people: "Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation" (Exod. xix. 6). "And they reign upon the earth," not

“we shall reign.” We must remember that Christ’s kingdom is “not of this world,” the reign at present is altogether a spiritual one ; the fuller kingdom begins when the number of the redeemed is complete, and the prince of this world is bound. Here is the Church’s share in her Lord’s triumph ; even now, in the midst of opposition, trial, and temptation, it is realized and enjoyed in the power and work of the Lamb, but hereafter it is to be absolute.

We notice that myriads of myriads of angels (an innumerable company of angels) take up the chorus. “Myriads” first, and “thousands” next, the latter as the smaller number perhaps referring to angels of a higher grade. Their position is a deeply interesting one ; they are farther from the Throne than the living creatures and the elders, and form an outer circle. The second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews is well worth our study in this connection. Angels take the greatest interest in the redemption of the human race ; but they are not themselves redeemed, they have never been “loosed from their sins by His blood.” Jesus, as man, was made “a little lower than the angels,” and now man, redeemed and won by Jesus, is seen occupying a more exalted place than they, nearer the Throne. Angels play, too, an all-important part in relation to mankind ; all through the Bible we may note their offices, and every true servant of God may comfort himself with the promise, “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.” But do not let us fall into the mistake of imagining that people, when they die, are going to be angels ; they are going, after Paradise, to be infinitely higher, redeemed members of the human race, and to occupy a circle nearer the Throne than the angels do. The song of this great host is one of worship again, “Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing.” It is sevenfold, for it is perfect. The article is placed, you will notice, only before the word “power ;” perhaps to give it prominence, because of the reign just spoken of, and the fact that the Lamb alone was *able* to open the book and to loose the seals ; but more probably used as an aggregate article, the ascription, though sevenfold, forming one perfect whole. Next the creation takes up the anthem. The expression, “on the sea,” is introduced here, making the description

fourfold—four being the earth number, but here only signifying completeness. No one and no thing is left out. We compare, with the greatest interest, Eph. i. 10 and Col. i. 20, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him;" "And, having made peace through the Blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." The article is here placed before each item of the ascription—the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, unto the ages of the ages. Then it is stated that the four living creatures said, "Amen." As they commenced the service, so now they close it. Their anthem has been taken up by universal acclaim, and now goes back to the point from which it started. The closing of the whole scene is intensely graphic; the one loud "Amen!" of the living creatures is the last *sound* heard, while the closing *sight* is that of the Church universal, prostrate in adoration and in *silent* worship. Then commences the vision of the opening of the seals.

The chorus exhibits the harmony of the universe in the thought of the completion of God's purposes, in the perfect execution of that which He originally contemplated in Christ Jesus, "the First-born of all creation," and now "the Head of the Body, the Church." "Ages of preparation had passed away; one dispensation had followed another; prophets had 'sought and searched diligently, searching what time, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did point to, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them.' Creation itself had groaned and travailed in pain together until now; how weary had been the years and centuries that had passed, amidst the oppression of the poor, and the sighing of the needy, amidst wrongs unrighted, and innocent blood poured out like water, to gratify the lust of ambition or the fierce spirit of revenge, amidst ignorance instead of knowledge, and sorrow instead of joy. At last the regeneration of the world has come, and in one outburst of song, all created things send up their shout of triumph and their hymn of praise."¹

¹ Professor Milligan, in Dr. Schaff's "Commentary," p. 409.

Let me impress carefully upon you the fact that this scene is vouchsafed to St. John as that which is to be the close of all. The glorious consummation to which the Church is to reach, but which she can reach only through the struggle which is yet to be revealed. He is supported in the contemplation of the terrible scenes which follow by the revelation of their certain issue. So the Church in all ages, and we as individuals, have this same support. The issue is *sure*, for it rests upon the work of the Triune God, and upon the sacrifice and priesthood of the Lamb. But the way to the consummation, alike for the Church and the individual, is long and steep. The progress is not that of a great river, rapid and unbroken, but it is rather that of the rising tide, which seems to come in only to roll out again, and the advance of which can only be discerned by watching a dry spot on the beach till it is covered by the incoming flood, which gradually fills in with its rising waters each nook and cranny of the shore. We crave for holiness, for the fulfilment of our noblest and purest ideals; these shall, indeed, be ours when the Lord Himself enters on the full fruition of His redeeming work. One day shall come the realization of our highest yearnings, and the fullest satisfaction of the deepest longings of our souls; but *now* the union with Him is to be one of suffering, of patient waiting and hopeful expectancy. Our beatitude *then* will be, "Blessed are they who rejoice in the fruition;" *now* it is, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness." "Blessed are they who share in the Church's trials," as—

"Mid toil, and tribulation,
And tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation
Of peace for evermore;
Till with the vision glorious
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest."

(Hymns A. & M., 215.)

INSTRUCTION XVI.

CHAPTER vi. 1-8.

6 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts, saying, Come and see.

2 And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo, a black horse: and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, || A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny, and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

8 And I looked, and behold, a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed

6 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder,

2 Come¹. And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon had a bow; and there was given unto him a crown: and he came forth conquering, and to conquer.

3 And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living crea-

4 ture saying, Come¹. And another horse came forth, a red horse: and to him that sat thereon it was given to take ²peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

5 And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, Come¹. And I saw, and behold, a black horse; and he that sat thereon had a balance in

6 his hand. And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, A ³measure of wheat for a ⁴penny, and three measures of barley for a ⁴penny; and the oil and the wine hurt thou not.

7 And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying,

¹ Some ancient authorities add *and see*.

² Some ancient authorities read *the peace of the earth*.

³ Gr. *chaenix*, a small measure.

⁴ See marginal note on Matt. xviii. 28.

|| The word *chaenix* signifieth a measure containing one wine quart, and the twelfth part of a quart.

|| Or, to
him.

with him: and power was given unto them, over the fourth part of the earth to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

8 Come¹. And I saw, and behold, a pale horse: and he that sat upon him, his name was Death; and Hades followed with him. And there was given unto them authority over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with ²death, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

¹ Some ancient authorities add *and see*.

² Or, *pestilence*.

WE should have set ourselves an almost insurmountable task, and one altogether foreign to the purpose in view, if we were to attempt to examine one-tenth of the explanations of the different schools upon the direct Apocalyptic vision which we are now about to consider.

I desire earnestly to make these instructions of *present* and personal use, and I shall treat the opening of the seals as depicting the *general* characteristics of the Church's trials, rather than as setting forth any *particular* event. It must be of interest to us all to notice at the outset, that the number "seven" is again divided into "four" and "three," "four" being the world number. The first four unsealings set forth the trials which the Church has to undergo in her relations with the world. Two features are common to each of the four: (a) a rider seated upon a horse, one white, another red, another black, and another pale; (b) in each case the voice of one of the living beings issues the invitation, "Come."

"Ye must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." If we bear this in mind, everything will fall into its natural place and order. Christ's reign has to be established, but it is not to be by a bloodless contest; His followers have to face sorrow and trial of every description before the glorious consummation comes, but in all these they are upheld by the remembrance of the indissoluble tie which unites their weakness with His omnipotence, and their ignorance with His supreme wisdom. An evil and opposing world has to be overcome; it will not be overcome without a terrific struggle; in that struggle we must expect to take our share.

Vs. 1-3. It is not quite clear that we are justified in taking the four living creatures in the order in which they have already appeared before us in ch. iv. 7; but the

temptation to do so is strong. If we do, it is the voice of the *lion* which St. John hears first as the noise of thunder.

He has already appeared as one of the representatives of redeemed creation, and the idea of His strength is peculiarly appropriate to one who went forth "conquering and to conquer." Notice that all the expressions used denote conquest and triumph; besides the specific statement, "He came forth conquering, and to conquer," the *white* horse is emblematical of victory; so is the crown; while from the bow (the instrument which wounds from afar, as the sword does at close quarters) he shoots the arrows, which are "very sharp in the heart of the king's enemies." "If a man will not turn, He will whet His sword; He *hath* bent His bow and made *it* ready." "And verily sharp are those arrows of love which subdue the hardest heart." "O glorious wound!" cries Nyssen, "O sweet stroke! whereby life and love penetrate into our inner man!" "*Thy arrows* in very deed: Thou art the true Elisha that must command to take bow and quiver; Thou must lay Thy hands, Thy wounded hands, on his to strengthen them, before each Joash among Thy priests can shoot the arrow of the Lord's deliverance. And all their virtue comes from Thy bed of death, the hard bed of the Cross" ("Commentary on the Psalms," Neale and Littledale, vol. ii. p. 104). The symbolism of the horses had been used by Zechariah previously, though in a different connection (Zech. i. 8; vi. 2-5).

Now we come to the important question, "Who is the rider that sits upon this white horse?" It will help us to decide if we remember that wars, famines, and pestilences are foretold by our blessed Lord in that discourse upon the last things, of which, as we have already seen, we have much reason to believe this Apocalypse to be an extension. They are also mentioned as among God's "four sore judgments" in Ezek. xiv. 21. If we now read ch. xix. 11, there can be little doubt that it is our Lord Himself, going forth to final victory; it is our Lord, too, as the Head of the Church, and *personifying Christianity*. This thought will emphasize the importance and the fact of our union with Him in the great battle. We ought not to pass over the fact that in our Revised Version the words "and see" are omitted, and each of the utterances of the living creatures is simply "Come." Many writers of great authority believe the word to be addressed to Christ, and not to St. John,

and to be part of the expression of the "groaning and travailling in pain together of the whole creation."

Vs. 3 and 4. The second living creature speaks. If we follow Bishop Wordsworth, we shall see here the calf, the sacrificial animal, emblem not of the sufferings of Christ only, but of those also who, under this seal, are pictured as suffering with Him. Another horse appears, whose colour is red, *i.e.* the blood colour, for the colour of the horse, in each case, corresponds with the mission of its rider. This is one of the "sore judgments" of Almighty God, but it is also, through the weakness of man's nature, a result of our Lord's coming into the world; "I came not to send peace, but a sword;" or, in other words, the struggle which awakens opposition whenever Christ is faithfully proclaimed. Or, again, it may set forth the fate of the martyrs at the hands of the world-power. But, inasmuch as wars and rumours of wars are declared by our Lord to be the beginning of sorrows, it seems better to look upon the expression "the earth," as we did in ch. i. 7, as the *ungodly world*, so that the "killing" is not only that of the good at the hands of the wicked, but bloodshed generally. The word "kill" is that used of the Lamb "as it had been slaughtered," and may suggest this double thought; they refuse the sacrifice of the slaughtered Lamb, and are themselves slaughtered, as sheep for the sacrifice!

Vs. 5 and 6. Bishop Wordsworth allies this third living being, as he does the others, with the previous revelation; he sees here the one which had a "face as of a man," and, making the picture doubly symbolical, he interprets the famine in a spiritual sense, as portending the rise of heresy. He is clearly justified in this to a certain extent, as a reference to Amos viii. 11 will show, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, not a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord." But it seems simpler to regard this as only another part of the foretold "beginning of sorrows;" the voice of the living creature with a face as a man would then indicate human sympathy with the sufferers. If the "red" horse signifies war, this, the black one, will signify severe scarcity, if not actual famine; black is with us (though not with all nations) the colour of mourning. When famine, caused by locusts, enters the city as the vanguard of God's avenging hosts, Joel the prophet

cries, "The day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand ; a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, as the dawn spread upon the mountains ; a great people and a strong, there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after them, even to the years of many generations ; . . . at their presence the peoples are in anguish ; all faces are waxed pale."¹ All the details of the vision also denote scarcity ; first, the rider has a pair of balances in his hand (of which I shall speak presently) ; then a voice in the midst of the four living creatures cries, "A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny." The marginal note in our reference Bibles informs us that "the word 'choenix' signifieth a measure containing one wine quart and the twelfth part of a quart." Herodotus tells us that in dry measure it was one man's daily allowance ; in St. Matt. xx. 2 the penny (denarius) is a day's wages for a labourer, so that, putting these facts together, we see that a man would have to spend a whole day's wages for his corn alone, getting for his money one measure only, instead of, as at ordinary times, sixteen or twenty. He could get, it is true, three measures of barley for the same amount, but that was the food of the very poorest, and a favourite type of insignificance and unworthiness (compare Gideon's dream, Judg. vii. 9-15). The balances intensify the picture, for the weighing of the corn, instead of measuring it, implies the dealing of it out to the exactitude of even a single grain. So God had said, "When I break your staff of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver your bread again by weight ; and ye shall eat and not be satisfied" (Lev. xxvi. 26). The misery is intensified by the fact that the luxuries remain untouched, "See that thou hurt not the oil and the wine ;" these are valuable gifts from Him "who bringeth forth food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make him a cheerful countenance," but men cannot *live* on them ; and to have these in plenty while the necessities of life are scarce, would add to the trial. Professor Milligan, however, sees in the picture the preservation of God's people, and their special and peculiar portion ; while the ungodly (the inhabitants of the earth) are suffering such straits as we have described, *they* are able to say, "Thou preparest a

¹ Joel ii. 1, 2, and 6.

table before me in the presence of my enemies ; Thou anointest my head with oil, and my cup runneth over."

Vs. 7 and 8 introduce to us the opening of the fourth seal. The invitation connected therewith, if the four living creatures are to be individualized, comes from the flying eagle, symbol of the victory over death and the grave ; for the next horse is of the livid pallor of a corpse ; the rider is Death personified. This rider, we are expressly told, Hades follows *with*, the two being inseparable. Hades is not the place of torment, but that of departed spirits. Authority is given unto *them*, the two together, over the fourth part of the earth. Let us remember when we are tempted to doubt God's love, "Thou couldst have no power at all, except it were given thee from above." Power is also given to them to kill with sword (not the sword of v. 4, for another word is used), famine, and pestilence, and by the direct agency of wild beasts ; some suggest those of the amphitheatre, though it is more probable that a sequence is intended, the famine being the outcome of the ravages of the sword, pestilence of the famine, death of the pestilence, and wild beasts multiplying as a result of the diminution of the population.

To sum up, I think we must look upon these first four seals, not as revealing any one special calamity (though they may be applicable, most appropriately, to particular events), but as setting forth certain main characteristics of the whole course of the Church's history. God must execute righteous judgment on the world of the ungodly, and the Church on earth must be, till her Lord comes, the "Church militant;" but the result is set forth in the first seal, which is the summary of the other four, Christ going forth "conquering and to conquer." The Church's lot, though it be militant, is conquering too. Her labour, night and day, in her Lord and by His power, must be that *she* may conquer, and share His glory in the day when His enemies are made His footstool.

That which is true of the Church as a whole, applies to the individual ; we shall be happy men and women even amidst the sore judgments of God, if, sharing both the contest and the victory, we can truly say, "Whereunto I also labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily."

INSTRUCTION XVII.

CHAPTER vi. 9 TO vii. 3.

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake, and the Sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the Moon became as blood.

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her ||untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

14 *And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and Island were moved out of their places.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains,

9 And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held :

10 and they cried with a great voice, saying, How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And there was given them to each one a white robe ; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, which should be killed even as they were, should ¹ be fulfilled.

12 And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake ; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as

13 blood ; and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs, when she is shaken of a great

14 wind. And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up ; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the ²chief captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and free-

¹ Some ancient authorities read *have fulfilled* their course.

² Or, *military tribunes*. Gr. *chilarchs*.

|| Or, *green figs*.

* Is. 34. 4.

* Luke
23. 30.

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, *Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb :

17 For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand ?

7 And after these things, I saw four Angels standing on the four corners of the Earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

2 And I saw another Angel ascending from the East, having the seal of the living God : and he cried with a loud voice to the four Angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the Sea,

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains ;

16 and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the

17 wrath of the Lamb : for the great day of their wrath is come ; and who is able to stand ?

7 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow on the earth, or on the sea, or

2 upon any tree. And I saw another angel ascend from the sunrising, having the seal of the living God : and he cried with a great voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth

3 and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we shall have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.

IN the opening of the fifth seal we have finished, for the present, with the world-number "four," and now come to the heavenly number "three." Most strikingly we pass, in the Revelation itself, from the visible world to the invisible. The scene now presented to the *spiritual* vision of the apostle (for souls are not naturally visible) is that of the souls of the faithful martyrs. If we keep in view our idea that the Apocalypse is an enlargement of Our Lord's discourse upon the last things, we can hardly help remembering His words, "They shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you ; and ye shall be hated of all nations for My Name's sake." Compare also St. Matt. xxiii. 34-36. Some, however, express the doubt whether the martyrs here are other than those of the Old Testament dispensation, holding that the cry for vengeance is contrary to the spirit of the New. In any case, we may call to mind the passage, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give

place unto wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

The first point to decide is—What is meant by the altar? Many take it to signify the altar of incense, from which the cry of the martyrs, the "incense" already referred to, goes up; but this explanation, however attractive, can, I think, hardly be the correct one, for they themselves are spoken of as having been slaughtered for the word of God, and the testimony that they held. They cry out later on, "How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our *blood* on them that dwell on the earth?" The most satisfactory explanation, therefore, seems to be that they have suffered, in anticipation, with Christ. The offering of themselves has been laid upon the altar of *sacrifice*, and their out-poured blood pleads, like that of Abel. "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground." It is thus the altar of burnt-offering, which we see here in its glorious antitype; all who are faithful may comfort themselves with the thought of the same joint sacrifice with Christ; co-operation in the sacrifice of the cross. "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me." "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." An objection which might possibly be raised to this view is that the great brazen altar of burnt-offering stood in the *outer* court of the tabernacle; but, on examination, this rather strengthens our view than otherwise. If we look upon the slain as the martyrs of the Old Testament, we know that they lived under that dispensation in which "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." They, without us, are not to be made perfect. So we see them here, anxious and impatient for the consummation. "The testimony which they held" is that entrusted to them by God, faithfulness to which is an essential feature of all true *witness*. We have here then, I think, without much doubt, the faithful of the *Old Testament*, who have not yet received the promise, waiting, and longing, and crying out for it. This view is strengthened by the use, in the next verse, of the word "Master." This, in the Greek, is not the word generally used when speaking of our Lord, but

one which rather points to the autocracy of God. It unites them with the New Testament saints as fellow-servants, and is more probably addressed to God than specifically to the Lord Jesus. An interesting instance of its use, where it is evidently so addressed to God, is "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace." God is therefore here the absolute Jehovah, the Triune God.⁹ He is addressed as *the* Holy and True, absolutely. It is His cause in which these slain have been faithful *unto death*, the cause of holiness and truth; hence the force of the attributes. "They that dwell on the earth," are, as before, the ungodly. The cry of the saints is answered in two ways: first, by the announcement that they must wait yet for a little time, until the number of the New Testament witnesses is made up; and secondly, by the gift, to each of them, of a white robe, which we have already explained. It is advisable to draw attention here to the fact that, though the martyrs specified are those whose blood has been actually shed for the Word of God and the testimony which they held, yet the word "martyr" only means "witness," and not *necessarily* one who actually dies for the faith. There have been, and are still, many lives that have been a continuous martyrdom. Every one standing up to-day for right against wrong, and truth against error, every one faithful to the testimony, every one who *gives his life* to God, is a martyr, and, if faithful to the end, will surely wear "the white robe."

"The seraph Abdiel, faithful found
Among the faithless, faithful only he;
Among innumerable false, unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal;
Nor number, nor example, with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
Though single."

Paradise Lost, Book v. 896-903.

The accompaniments of the opening of the sixth seal are :
(a) A great earthquake. (b) The sun becoming black as sackcloth. (c) The *whole* moon becoming as blood. (d) The stars falling like the first unripe figs of the fig-tree, when shaken of a great wind. Here, once again, the reference to St. Matt. xxiv. 29 is patent, and deeply interesting, besides that to St. Matt. xxiv. 7. Here are the portents

of the approaching coming of the Son of man, not the coming itself, for the sealing of the servants of God in their foreheads has not yet taken place. An earthquake is a frequent symbol of God's judgments; and the heavens, as well as the earth, are shaken as preliminary to the setting up of those things which cannot be shaken. Compare Heb. xii. 26, 27, "Now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain." The sun's light is quenched, the moon, at *her full*, becomes like blood, and thus, with the stars "falling unto the earth," makes up a graphic and a terrible picture, typifying God's judgment against sin. The heavens are removed, as a scroll when it is rolled up, calling to mind Isa. xxxiv. 4, "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree." The same prophet describes the heavens as "stretched out like a curtain" (Isa. xl. 22). The disruption is completed by every mountain and island being removed out of their places.

And now we have to determine who are meant by the kings of the earth, etc., etc. Notice that they are "of the earth;" therefore, according to our interpretation, the ungodly. And I think the passage is simply meant to show that no earthly position or riches will make any difference to the judgments of the Almighty. It seems hardly possible satisfactorily to specify any particular kings and great men, especially if we treat the rest of the passage figuratively. The grouping is again sevenfold, to denote its universal application—none shall escape. The magnificent language of the Prophet Isaiah is borne upon our ears: "And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth." Compare also Hosea x. 8, "They shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us." Which words are quoted by our Lord in St. Luke xxiii. 30. Awful as are these accompaniments, they are as nothing compared with that which follows, which is

described as "the wrath of the Lamb." This is directed against a godless world, and is, therefore, a part of the recompensing providence of God for His people. It is a very striking fact, that even the godless acknowledge Him now as "the Lamb," confessing to the truth of that which they had denied, and acknowledging that which they had despised. Then there comes "*the Great Day*." God has exhausted His ordinary judgments—the sword, the famine, the pestilence, and wild beasts—and then upon *the impenitent the Great Day falls*. For Christ's faithful people it is the beginning of the end. "Then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." The question, "Who is able to stand?" may well be asked. Whether asked by the ungodly, who stand condemned, or by the seer himself, it brings to us yet again the Old Testament scripture: "Who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth?" And the question is answered by that which follows, viz. the sealing of the servants of God in their foreheads. Once again the parallelism between this vision and our Lord's discourse on the last things is most striking (St. Matt. xxiv. 30, 31). "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Notice, as a parallel with v. 13, that our Lord goes on to speak of the fig-tree. Once again must we lay to heart the necessary lessons of endurance, and patience, and perseverance. We, too, must expect to have our share in these last and heavy trials; but we shall be upheld through them all by the remembrance that, while they are so awful to God's enemies, they are tragic preludes of eternal joy to those who love Him.

CHAPTER VII.

Divine consolation and support under trial is now, appropriately, the theme. It is difficult to say whether we should associate it with the opening of the sixth seal, or with that of the seventh, recorded in the next chapter. It is probably best to look upon it as an interlude, in which God vouchsafes Divine consolation before He reveals all that His saints will have to endure. The trials may

hurt and grieve, but they cannot destroy. The sealing—a perfected act—is also a continuous one, preserving them in the great tribulation, out of which, a little later on (v. 14), they are seen to have come. We must be careful to remember the great difference between the *judgments* which fall on the ungodly and the *tribulation* of the faithful, which is part of the necessary discipline of a Father's hand, part of their necessary share in Christ's sufferings, and an inseparable accompaniment of all faithfulness in the weary conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil. The Church is viewed as a whole. First, I think, without doubt, as the literal Israel, for the fulness of the Gentiles will have come in, "and so all Israel shall be saved" by "the Deliverer out of Zion, who shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Restored Israel must take its place in the events which usher in the Second Advent. Secondly, as the Gentile Church, represented by "the great multitude which no man can number, out of every nation, and of all tribes, and peoples, and tongues."

Now "four," we remember, is the earth-number. Here we have *four* angels ("He maketh His angels winds") standing at the four corners of the earth, *i.e.* the four cardinal points of the compass, whence the winds proceed ("Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live"). They are pictured as holding (in the sense of having power to control) the winds, which are ready to burst forth. They are, I imagine, figurative winds, which cannot hurt the chosen. Compare again St. Matt. xxiv. 31, "He shall send forth His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." These winds are restrained from a work of destruction such as that which storms would cause on earth to trees and other objects exposed to their fury, or on the sea, which, under their influence, becomes so terrible an agent of destruction. Then another angel is seen ascending from the sun-rising, the region whence comes light and warmth, and where God manifests His glory, fit and well-known type of the source whence He comes who is the "Sun of Righteousness rising upon the world with healing in His wings."¹ He has a seal of the

¹ In this connection it may not be out of place to call to mind the origin of our turning to the east at the repetition of the Creeds. When

living God, who is, and has, and gives, life. It is suggested by some that there were different seals for different objects. Here the seal is not the mark of a slave, but one of faithful service, in which protection, but not necessarily exemption, is ensured. Nothing is to be hurt till they are sealed. Compare God's words to Lot: "I cannot do anything till thou be come thither." Compare also Ezek. ix. It is, I hope, impossible for us to forget that we each have the mark of the cross of Christ upon our brow, the most conspicuous part of our body, a mark not seen of men, but ever visible to God—a seal which bears His "image and superscription," which has not only pledged us to Him *but Him to us*. It assures us, not of exemption from troubles, but of support and protection in them. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

the Church was a missionary Church working among the heathen, most of the candidates for Holy Baptism were necessarily adults. These were carefully taught the facts of the Faith for several weeks. A few days before their baptism, which was generally at Easter or Whitsuntide, they were solemnly taught the Creed, which was regarded as a kind of Christian watchword, too sacred even to be put in writing. On the day of their baptism they were assembled outside the church before dawn, and stood facing the west, where all was dark, as a symbol of their old life of sin and ignorance, and they were asked, "Dost thou renounce Satan?" To which they replied, "I renounce thee, Satan, and all thy service." Then they were turned round towards the east, where the first rays of the rising sun were visible in the sky—symbol to them that the Sun of Righteousness was dawning in their lives, and that they must walk as children of light. They were then asked, "Dost thou join the ranks of Christ?" To which they replied, "I join Thy ranks, O Christ." Then, for the only time in their lives probably, they repeated the Creed, as a kind of soldier's oath on enlisting in Christ's service; and were then baptized.

Thus, when the Creed afterwards came to be used in public worship, this custom of turning to the east was kept up as a reminder of our vow to turn our backs upon sin, to set our faces towards the light, and to stand shoulder to shoulder as enlisted soldiers of Christ.

INSTRUCTION XVIII.

CHAPTER vii. 4 TO END.

4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed : and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand, of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthali were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

9 After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands :

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the Angels

4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed, a hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel.

5 Of the tribe of Judah *were* sealed twelve thousand :

Of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand :

Of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand :

6 Of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand :

Of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand :

Of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand :

7 Of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand :

Of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand :

Of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand :

8 Of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand :

Of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand :

Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* sealed twelve thousand.

9 After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation, and of *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands ; and they cry with a great voice, saying, Salvation unto our God which sitteth on the throne, and unto the

stood round about the Throne, and about the Elders, and the four beasts, and all fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God for ever and ever, Amen.

13 And one of the Elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his Temple: and he that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell among them.

16 *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the Sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: *and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

11 Lamb. And all the angels were standing round about the throne, and about the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying,

12 Amen: ¹Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God ²for ever and ever.

13 Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, These which are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and

14 whence came they? And I ³say unto him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them,

17 nor any heat: for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.

¹ Gr. *The blessing, and the glory, &c.*

² Gr. *unto the ages of the ages.*

³ Gr. *have said.*

* ch. 21.

3.

* Is. 49.

10.

* Is. 25.

8.

ch. 21. 4.

THERE are many interpretations of this passage, but we will first see where there is an almost, if not quite general, consensus of opinion; the number 12 is the multiple of the Divine and the world number, 3×4 ; it is also the number of the tribes of Israel; 144 is its square, and this is multiplied by 1000 to give the idea of completeness. Many look upon the expression, "tribes of the children of

Israel," as referring to the whole Church, in which there is "neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision." Professor Godet takes it to denote the elect of Israel, not forming a part of the army of the Lamb till ch. xiv. 1-5. Others, again, look upon it as the literal Israel. May it not be that a combination of these views furnishes us with a fair and probable solution of the difficulty? For my own part, I cannot pass over the contrast of the specific number in the one case, and the unlimited statement in the other. In the one case 144,000, and in the other a great multitude which no man *could* number; and I believe the meaning to be this: the Old and the New Testament Churches are one in Jesus Christ; He has broken down the middle wall of partition, and both centre in Him (a Jew) as the corner-stone. Thus the whole Church of the faithful is represented in the two pictures, but that part which is the Jewish is set out, because it represents a special nation and race, by a specific number, not necessarily limited in its extent; for the very character of the definite number in its factors and as a whole shows that it is figurative, and so (paradoxical as it may seem) indefinite. A somewhat similar use of numbers will be found in our Lord's reply to St. Peter's question, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?" "I say not unto thee, Until seven times, but until seventy times seven." The whole Church, all one in Christ Jesus, appears before us later on, in two parts, the former being composed of those who attain to the first resurrection; but this present picture enhances the belief we all have, and all rejoice in, that God hath not cast away His ancient people. Ultimately all Israel, *i.e.* the Israelitish nation at large, will be saved, and it is here represented by a specific number, because it is viewed, for the time being, as an elect and separate nation. The Church, however, which our Lord Jesus is one day to present to Himself is to be not only a glorious Church, but a whole and an undivided one. The ultimate accomplishment of the Incarnation is to be the whole body of humanity raised to God. A strong argument in favour of the symbolical character of the picture is that all the tribes have exactly the same number sealed.

Now, in the mention of the tribes themselves, we are struck with several details of interest: (1) Judah, though

fourth-born, stands first ; there can hardly be any doubt why ; it is not simply because Reuben by sin forfeited his right of primogeniture, but because our Lord sprang out of Judah. (2) The tribe of Dan is omitted, while that of Joseph is mentioned twice, once in his own person, and again in that of Manasseh. Many suggestions have been made as to this omission, the Fathers treating Jacob's prophecy in Gen. xlix. 17, " Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward," as a declaration that anti-Christ was to spring from Dan, as Christ from Judah. Others note that Dan was the first tribe to lapse into idolatry, and therefore (as idolaters are outside the eternal city) this tribe is left out. Compare Amos viii. 14, " They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy God, O Dan, liveth ; and, The manner of Beersheba liveth ; even they shall fall, and never rise up again." Grotius, however, says that the tribe became gradually reduced to one family, that of Hussim, which perished in the wars before Ezra's time, and which is significantly omitted in 1 Chron. iv. (3) Ephraim's name is also absent—perhaps because he, too, was " joined to idols." Still, it is quite possible that Ephraim is included in Joseph, and Dan with Naphtali, whose own full brother he was, just as, at the division of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, Benjamin is included in Judah.

The fact, then, being first emphasized that " God hath not cast away His people," the scene is enlarged to include the whole Church, Jew and Gentile, " knit together in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of His Son Christ our Lord." The use of the word " tribes " enhances this view. Notice, most interestingly, v. 9 as it is in the Revised Version, with its one singular and three plurals. The human race is one in its origin, as it will, ultimately, be one in Christ, but it became separated into tribes, and peoples, and tongues. The innumerable multitude is seen standing " before the throne " as in ch. iv., and " before the Lamb " as in ch. v. They are arrayed in white robes, emblem of perfect purity and holiness, and have palms in their hands. These are not, I think, as is popularly supposed, palms of victory, but those of the ideal *Feast of Tabernacles*. See Lev. xxiii. 40, " And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of

goodly trees, branches of *palm trees*, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days." As in the earthly feast the Jews praised God for the ingathered harvest of the fruits of the field, so here is the completed harvest of redeemed and sanctified souls, with *its* accompaniments of praise, adoration, and worship. We can hardly pass over St. John xii. 12, etc. "Cried" is, in the Revised Version, "cry," suggesting their continuous occupation. It is, moreover, with a *great* voice, as we should, indeed, expect, welling up, as it does, from such a countless multitude, ascribing all the praise of their salvation to the God who "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth *in* Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," and "to the Lamb," who wrought out such a stupendous work. "Salvation" (*the* salvation which we have obtained) "unto our God which sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb;" *i.e.* all the blessings of salvation are to be ascribed to *Him*.

In the passage just quoted from St. John, the cry of the multitude is, "Hosanna!" "Save now!" The word is taken from Ps. cxviii. (which was, let us notice, recited on the Feast of Tabernacles), where in vs. 14, 15, 25, and 26, the connection is most striking: notice particularly the expression, "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous." Response to their cry is given, not by *many* angels, as in ch. v. 11, but by *all* the angels, who have placed themselves round the throne, and round the elders and the living creatures; notice that the order is here reversed, as viewed in the one case from centre to circumference, and *vice versâ*. They fall on their faces, as the elders did in ch. v. 14, in the attitude of worship. The "Amen," the glad acknowledgment on their part of unity of will and heart with God, is the same; the Doxology, too, is seven-fold, setting forth its completeness. The definite article is, in the original, before each word; *the* blessing, and *the* glory, etc., but the Lamb is not mentioned, probably because the angels were not the subjects of His great redeeming work. One of the elders seems now to answer St. John's unexpressed thoughts, by himself putting the question which is in the apostle's mind: "These which are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they?" It would seem that one of the elders

is the speaker, because the revelation is *about the Church*. Archdeacon Lee notes that "angels speak when visions are not expounded, and one of the living creatures when events are to happen through the agency of creation." "My lord" is the title of respect and reverence; "thou knowest" is not the knowledge of intuition, but of experience. Compare Ezek. xxxvii. 3.

Notice next the Revised Version, "These are they which *come* out of the great tribulation"—"Which are just come," as we should say, "out of the tribulation, the great one." Some suppose this to be that of the seventh seal, some that of the fifth, and others the great tribulation which is to precede the coming of Christ. See St. Matt. xxiv. 21, "Then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be." But I would suggest that, as *all* are evidently included, and *all* (Old and New Testament saints alike) could not have been subjected to the same *particular* tribulation, what is here referred to is that tribulation which, now in a less form, and anon in a greater, all God's people have to pass through. The washing of the robes is, of course, figurative, as are the robes themselves; the source of their whiteness is the "blood of the Lamb," by which we are justified, "accounted righteous before God," and as a result of which we are now *being*, and hereafter shall *be*, sanctified. For *imputed* righteousness must ever be allied, and that inseparably, with *inherent* righteousness. It must ever be a real, and not a speculative or imaginary thing; so that "washing in the blood of the Lamb," corresponding as it does with the truth, "The blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanseth us from all sin," presents to us rather the idea of health-giving transfusion.¹ The imputed righteousness is in its absolute perfection; the inherent, although now imperfect, is ever growing more and more, in the repetition of sanctified acts, into the perfect robe or *habit*. The expression "therefore" is to be allied, not only, or principally, with the fact that they "came out of great tribulation," but that they "washed their robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb." Christ is viewed as having now "sanctified

¹ "Aylwin," a book recently written by Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton, is capable of being spiritualized, and becomes thus a powerful illustration of a similar truth.

and cleansed His Church with the washing of water by the Word," and it is now presented a glorious and united Church, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." His redeemed are made "priests unto God," and therefore it is in His *temple* that they serve Him, that being the perfect centre of worship, where Christ sits both as King and Priest, and where to be is bliss. "Behold the Man whose name is *the Branch*; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the Temple of the Lord; even He shall build the Temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech. vi. 12, 13). The expression, "day and night," refers probably to the singers in 1 Chron. ix. 33, or to the perpetual watch kept by the priests and doorkeepers of the temple; "Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord" (Ps. cxxxiv. 1).

Notice, lastly, how beautiful the Revised Version is in v. 15, and how it bears out our theory that the palms refer to the Feast of Tabernacles. "He that sitteth on the throne shall *spread His tabernacle* over them." In the days gone by, "The Word was made Flesh and 'tabernacled' among men;" now He is in glory all unveiled, and spreading His "tabernacle" over them. Thus the ideal Feast of Tabernacles is again prominently before us. It is the perfect realization of Zech. xiv. 16, "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to *keep the Feast of Tabernacles*." And as that feast was the end of the hunger and thirst, and the burning heat of the sun, endured throughout the harvest ingathering, and now exchanged for the welcome shade of the booths and plentiful refreshment; so here, in contrast with previous sufferings, the hunger and thirst and the scorching heat of tribulation and persecution are all over. These are evils from which they shall be everlastingly delivered, and which are followed by the declaration of the good in which they shall eternally rest. "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall be their Shepherd" (see Ps. xxiii. 1), "and shall guide them" (see Isa. xlviii. 21). The same word is used in

the promise of our blessed Lord about "the Spirit of Truth;" "He shall guide you into all Truth." "Living fountains of waters" is rather "life's fountains of waters." The tears are the recognized accompaniments of tribulation:—

"If I find Him, if I follow,
What His guerdon here?
'Many a sorrow, many a labour,
Many a tear.'"

We may beautifully adapt the words of one of our truest poets—

"Blest tears of soul-felt penitence!
In whose benign, redeeming flow
Is felt the first, the only sense
Of guiltless joy that guilt can know.

"'There's a drop,' said the Peri, 'that down from the moon
Falls through the withering airs of June
Upon Egypt's land, of so healing a power,
So balmy a virtue, that e'en in the hour
The drop descends, contagion dies,
And health reanimates earth and skies!
Oh, is it not thus, thou man of sin,
The precious tears of repentance fall,
Though foul thy fiery plagues within,
One heavenly drop hath dispelled them all?'

"And now—behold him kneeling there
By the child's side, in humble prayer,
While the same sunbeam shines upon
The guilty and the guiltless one,
And hymns of joy proclaim through heaven
The triumph of a soul forgiven!
'Twas when the golden orb had set,
While on their knees they linger'd yet,
There fell a light more lovely far
Than ever came from sun or star,
Upon the tear that, warm and meek,
Dew'd that repentant sinner's cheek.
To mortal eye this light might seem
A northern flash or meteor beam—
But well the enraptured Peri knew
'Twas a bright smile the angel threw
From heaven's gate, to hail that tear
Her harbinger of glory near!
'Joy, joy for ever! my task is done—
The gates are pass'd, and heaven is won!'"¹

"Before Christ's coming," it has been quaintly said, "before *He* consecrated weeping by His own 'strong crying and tears,' nothing but salt drops of bitter water

¹ T. Moore, "Paradise and the Peri."

flowed from the eyes of men ; but now they are costly pearls, dear and precious in God's sight. Our tears are fivefold—penitence for sin, fear of judgment, weariness of exile, compassion for sinful friends, longing for our country."

"Comfort Thy people, O Lord, and deliver us from the evil captivity of sin, that what we sow here in tears, we may reap in joy through Thy bounty."

I append two helpful passages from the Old Testament: "They thirsted not when He led them through the deserts; He caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them; He clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out" (Isa. xlviii. 21, R.V.). "He hath swallowed up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the reproach of His people shall He take away from off all the earth, for the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. xxv. 8, R.V.).

INSTRUCTION XIX.

CHAPTER viii. 1-9.

8 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

2 And I saw the seven Angels which stood before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.

3 And another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all Saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

4 And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the Saints, ascended up before God, out of the Angel's hand.

5 And the Angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake:

6 And the seven Angels which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound.

7 The first Angel sounded, and there followed hail, and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth, and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

8 And the second Angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea, and the third part of the sea became blood.

8 And when he opened the seventh seal, there followed a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stand before God; and there were given unto them seven trumpets.

3 And another angel came and stood¹ over the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should² add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before

4 the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand.

5 And the angel⁴ taketh the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it⁵ upon the earth: and there followed thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

7 And the first sounded, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast⁵ upon the earth: and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

¹ Or, at.

² Gr. give.

³ Or, for.

⁴ Gr. hath taken.

⁵ Or, into.

|| Or,
add it
to the
prayers.

9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the Sea, and had life, died, and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; and there died the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, *even* they that had life; and the third part of the ships was destroyed.

THERE are many who think that the revelation of the trumpets is itself the revelation of the seventh seal—that the trumpets are developed out of the seals, and the vials out of the trumpets; but I think that while there may be much which is common to both these revelations, the two are nevertheless distinct in their object. The seals may be regarded as setting forth the treatment which the Church is to receive at the hands of the world, and her consequent trials, while the trumpets exhibit God's judgments upon the world, *God's people being now sealed*. The judgment connected with the vials is that on the *apostate Church*. We shall do well to remember these three points. The parallel, as before, between this and our Lord's discourse on the last things helps us greatly (St. Matt. xxiv. 29–31). Notice the expression “tribes of the earth,” *i.e.* the wicked; also “He shall send His *angels* with a *great sound of a trumpet*, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

It seems right, then, to treat the opening of the seventh seal as the conclusion of a distinct revelation. By it the roll-book in the right hand of the Lamb becomes open and legible. We do but repeat the language of Instruction XIV. when we say, “May we not hope that He, our Redeemer, in whose hands it is left, has yet to read it out when all has come to pass, and when His reign is complete?” If this view be correct, it seems to explain the fact that the only direct result of the opening is “silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.” The word “about” is characteristic of St. John (see his holy Gospel, i. 39; vi. 10, 19; xi. 18). The half-hour is scarcely literal, though it is a period absolutely and literally short. It is, I think—

(a) The time occupied by the Lamb Himself in reading the book of God's eternal plan.

(b) The time given to St. John as a period of rest and meditation between the two revelations.

(c) "An allusion to a custom in the Jewish worship. When the priest went into the temple to burn incense, all the instruments which had united in grand chorus before made a solemn pause. During this interval the priest offered up his propitiatory devotion within the temple, while the people stood praying in silence without" (Valpy). I think the expressions in Psa. lxii. 1 and lxxv. 1 refer to this detail of worship: "My soul truly waiteth *still* upon God," i.e. literally, "My soul is silent to God;" "Praise *waiteth* for Thee, O God, in Zion." All the passages imply the hushed and awe-full reverence which befits God's servants.

(d) It is, moreover, a lesson to us; "even blind, human instinct, feeling after God," teaches us the value of silence. Canon Woodhouse, in his "Life of the Soul," says, "The lonely mountain top, the silent watches of the night, the dim, quiet adytum of temples, shut in by massive walls, approached by long avenues gradually closing in the worshipper—there was a deep truth underlying all these accessories of mere human systems. It was a true instinct if it was not something more, and the clear revelation of truth by the Son of God has not contradicted the old theory of worship and communion with God, but confirmed it: 'When thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.'"

(e) The silence, I think, clearly indicates *the absence of any revelation to St. John* of the nature and character of the book. He might have expected to see and hear much, as he had in the case of the other seals: instead of which the countless host is all hushed and still; and it seems almost as if it had been said to him, as to the Prophet Habakkuk, "The vision is yet for an appointed time; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

In v. 2 it would seem that reference is intended to seven particular angels (or archangels), who occupy this exalted position ("stood" is, in the Revised Version, "stand," indicating their habitual posture). If this surmise is correct, Gabriel would be one of the number: "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God." Raphael would be another,

if we may accept the striking passage in Tobit xii. 15, "I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and go in and out before the glory of the Holy One." To these seven angels are given seven trumpets—hardly, I should think, the trumpets used in days of rejoicing. Liddell and Scott give "war-trumpet;" and this is the most suitable view, if we are correct in saying that the reference is to judgments on the world of the ungodly. "Another angel" is by some thought to be Jesus, the Son of God, our great High Priest, the Angel of the Covenant; but the Greek is hardly definite enough to support this view. This angel stands as a ministering spirit, or a subordinate priest, at the antitypical altar of incense; the incense itself is not his, but is *given to him*. It is clearly that of the meritorious obedience of Jesus Christ, which, "offered with" or "added to" the prayers of all the saints, makes those otherwise imperfect petitions acceptable to God. The corresponding ritual in the Old Testament is to be found in Lev. xvi. 12, 13, and xxiii. 11. The prayers and incense ascend together, pleading in behalf of the sufferings, needs, and troubles of God's people, asking, I suggest, not in a spirit of uncharity, but in that of righteous longing for the consummation of His kingdom, for God's judgments upon the world. This incense, mingled with the prayers of all the saints, now goes up and reaches God. We are evidently intended to understand that God hears and accepts the incense-accompanied prayers; no prayer accompanied by the incense of Jesus is ever denied audience and acceptance. The incense then having been burned in the censer, this is now filled with fire or hot coals from the altar, symbolical of the fiery judgments of God, which are about to descend, for they are "cast upon the earth." The earth and they who dwell upon it set forth those who are partakers of the sinful spirit of the world, and not literally all the inhabitants of the earth. Professor Milligan points out that although the righteous *suffer*, the *judgments* of the trumpets fall upon the world alone, and he notes that this had been the experience of the Old Testament Church from the beginning, no distinction being made between the Egyptians and the Israelites till the close of the third plague. They suffered that of the waters turned into blood, of the frogs, and of the lice, in common; then it was that God said, "I will sever in that day the land of Goshen,

in which My people dwell." But the sufferings of the righteous are not a judgment. Read in this connection St. Luke xii. 49, "I am come to send fire on the earth ; and what will I, if it be already kindled?"¹ The accompaniments of the Divine judgments are appropriate and terrible—"thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake." They correspond, in a tragic way, with the outburst of song and praise which went up when the priest had finished the offering of the incense and had pronounced God's blessing upon the people. We are then reminded strongly of Joel ii. 1-15. The seven angels prepare themselves to sound the trumpets. The imagery is familiar to us: "the last trump," "the voice of the archangel and the trump of God." Bishop Wordsworth draws attention to the similarity between the judgments pronounced and some of the plagues of Egypt, the Church being, like Israel in Egypt, persecuted by the powers that be. The division into "four" and "three" is again very marked, and it will be seen at once that in the first four we have the great divisions of the visible creation—the earth, the sea, rivers and fountains, the sun, etc. These judgments have been stayed, remember, till the servants of God were sealed in their foreheads. In the next three the judgments proceed, from natural objects by which men indirectly suffer, to direct woes, such as pain, and death, and sickness. The parallel to the accompaniments of the first trumpet-sounding is Exod. ix. 23, 25. The mingling with blood is a terrible additional feature, meaning either a shower of blood accompanying the hail and lightning, or else the resulting destruction. The third part of the earth was burnt up—*i.e.* the earth's surface—one-third of the trees, and *all* the green grass. It would seem as though "one-third" was mentioned to emphasize a *gradual* growth in the intensity of the judgments ; it is a partial judgment of one who has more in store for an unrepentant world. The tripartite division is met with in the Old Testament, in Ezek. v. 2, 12, and, in a different proportion, in Zech. xiii. 8, 9. I hardly think that the trees and grass are here metaphorical, but only used to show the extent of the destruction, involving the change of a beautiful country into a desolate wilderness ;

¹ Some modern critics so punctuate this passage in the original, as to enable us to read, "And what do I wish? Oh that it were already kindled!"

but if imagery is intended, and we follow that of the Old Testament, the trees would signify the haughty, the "proud and lofty" (Isa. ii. 11-13), and the grass the people generally (Isa. xl. 6, 7).

At the sound of the second trumpet, a *mountain-like* mass, burning with fire, is cast into the sea. The imagery is again that of the Old Testament (see Jer. li. 25). Here also, probably, it is only intended to show the awful character of the judgment, as there is no necessary sequence between the mountain burning with fire and the third part of the sea becoming blood. That which, I think, is emphasized is the temporal judgment in each case, upon the Christ-neglecting, anti-Christ-glorifying world, corresponding to the Old Testament scenes of desolation and destruction, and the famine and the sword (see Isa. li. 19). In the first judgment the injured earth *may* signify bad harvests, and so scarcity and famine; and in the second the destruction of the ships *may* signify decline of trade.

The consideration of the rest of the chapter can hardly be satisfactorily dealt with in this Instruction; leaving it, therefore, till the next, we will conclude by seeking the lesson which seems to be taught in that immediately before us. We may, indeed we *must*, to a certain extent, have to take our share on earth of the sorrows which accompany these judgments; but it is a very different thing to bear them as signals of our coming redemption, and to have to bear them as members of a sinful world, and in sympathy with its sinful spirit. In the appalling siege of Lucknow, every ping of the bullet, every bellow of the cannon, every cheer of the relieving host outside, had a twofold effect; it sent terror into the hearts of the mutineers, and filled with new joy and hope our own suffering and beleaguered countrymen.

So we, when these things begin to come to pass, are to look up and lift up our heads, for our redemption draweth nigh. These signs and judgments on a guilty world are to be to us the clear indication that God's purposes are ripening fast, and that the full answer to our daily prayer is speeding on apace. "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Times of special danger should be times of special prayer.

INSTRUCTION XX.

CHAPTER viii. 10 TO ix. 6.

10 And the third Angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters :

11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood, and the third part of the waters became wormwood, and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

12 And the fourth Angel sounded, and the third part of the Sun was smitten, and the third part of the Moon, and the third part of the stars, so as the third part of them was darkened : and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

13 And I beheld, and heard an Angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three Angels which are yet to sound.

9 And the fifth Angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth : and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the

10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell from heaven a great star, burning as a torch, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of the

11 waters ; and the name of the star is called Wormwood : and the third part of the waters became wormwood ; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars ; that the third part of them should be darkened, and the day should not shine for the third part of it, and the night in like manner.

13 And I saw, and I heard¹ an eagle, flying in mid heaven, saying with a great voice, Woe, woe, woe, for them that dwell on the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, who are yet to sound.

9 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven fallen unto the earth : and there was given to him the key of the pit of the abyss.

2 And he opened the pit of the abyss ; and there went up a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace ; and the

¹ Gr. *one eagle.*

air were darkened, by reason of the smoke of the pit.

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth, and unto them was given power, as the Scorpions of the earth have power.

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree: but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

5 And it was given them that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months, and their torment was as the torment of a Scorpion, when he striketh a man.

6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it, and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

3 And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth

4 have power. And it was said unto them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads.

5 And it was given them that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when it

6 striketh a man. And in those days men shall seek death, and shall in no wise find it; and they shall desire to die, and death fleeth from them.

THE accompaniment of the sounding of the third trumpet is that of the falling of a star, burning like a torch. This indicates, I think, the terrible change involved in the very idea of a star becoming a torch. The one shines with heavenly light, and speaks God's praises; the other finds the material for its light in earthly things, so this star (to which, to describe its bitterness, the name "Wormwood" is given) by its fall turns into bitterness the fountains of waters, reversing the order of which Exod. xv. 23-25 and Ezek. xlvii. are the beneficent types. "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne" leads His people to "fountains of waters of life." The world and its votaries choose the waters which turn to bitterness instead. Compare "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John iv. 13, 14). The picture may well include any or all of the following details, viz. the result of heresy and irreligion; the pure fountain of truth corrupted and defiled; or pestilence, which springs more than from

anything else from impure water ; or perhaps drunkenness, our own great national curse (water turned into fire) ; or, generally speaking, that utter want of anything like permanent satisfaction, which a life which is "of the earth, earthy," is sure to bring, to its own bitterness. A point to notice is that the progressive judgment of the trumpets now affects men themselves ; the first touched them indirectly in the destruction of vegetable life ; the second in the destruction of animal though not human life ; now the men themselves are affected, though not unto death. In reference to "wormwood," we may read *à propos* of idolatry or heresy, Deut. xxix. 18 ; of guilty pleasure, Prov. v. 4 ; of God's judgments, Jer. ix. 15 ; and of departure from God generally, Heb. xii. 15.

With the sounding of the fourth trumpet we almost hear the echo of St. Mark xiii. 24, "In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light," etc. ; and notice at once the correspondence with the plague of thick darkness, under which Egypt suffered, though as yet it is, like those of the other three trumpets, a partial judgment only. Gloom seems to be the reigning idea, and want of sunlight may signify bad seasons and many another woe. The shining night is that of a bright eastern sky. The metaphor is clearly an indication of general misery and wretchedness, just as its opposite is a picture of highest happiness. See Isa. xxx. 26, "Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."

We now come to a passage where, through a generally recognized error on the part of a copyist, our Authorized Version reads "angel," instead of "eagle," or, strictly translated, *one eagle*. Compare Hab. i. 8 and St. Matt. xxiv. 28. Its flight in mid heaven suggests that there it can best be seen, and thence its voice best heard, and the whole emblem is one in every way suitable for a messenger of coming woes, which are to be far greater than those already pronounced. Notice that they are to come upon the inhabitants of the earth—upon those, that is, who are partakers of the evil spirit of the world.

CHAPTER IX.

Here again I must draw attention to the Revised Version. The star is not seen to fall, but seen "fallen." It represents an evil angel, or power, or the personification of such. Perhaps, and as many think, Satan himself, the god of this world. Compare Isa. xiv. 12. It is, most probably, Anti-christ personified. Christ holds the keys of death and of Hades; but the key of the well of the abyss is now given to this fallen star. The allusion is, very likely, to the custom of locking the covering of the wells; and is in awful contrast to the well of water springing up unto everlasting life. The abyss is the abode of the devil and his angels. This well of the abyss he opens, with the immediate result that a smoke like that of a great furnace bursts up. We shall at once see the interpretation here: "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." Satan is the opposite: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Now, as out of the atmosphere of light all good springs, so out of this murky atmosphere of darkness all evil comes. First, locusts (as in the Egyptian plague), but with power corresponding with that of earthly scorpions. The devastation caused by locusts is well known, but it almost surpasses description. That of Exod. x. 15 should be read. Not a blade of grass or a single leaf survives their ravages, for wherever they alight they strip every living plant of its verdure. We must notice, however, that the smoke comes out of the abyss, and the locusts out of the smoke, so that it is not clear whether they represent direct demoniacal agency, or evil men led on by Satan. The imagery is familiar to us in the second chapter of the Book of the Prophet Joel, and Dr. Pusey's note thereon is well worth transcribing: "The allegory is so complete that the prophet compares them to those things which are, in part, intended under them—warriors, horses, and instruments of war. The object of the allegory is to describe the order and course of the Divine judgments—how they are terrific, irresistible, universal, overwhelming, penetrating everywhere, overspreading all things, excluded by nothing." One feature of the judgment,

however, is that these locusts, with their scorpion-like power to sting, are not to hurt that which is their natural food, but mankind, and of them only those who have not the seal of God in their foreheads. The immunity of Christ's people from *this one specific calamity* seems to mark it as being of a spiritual character, such as superstition, error, agnosticism, infidelity, and all kinds of moral evil. Yet notice again that the power to *kill* is withheld. That comes afterwards in the ascending scale of awful judgment. This is limited to an agony so great that they would welcome death gladly, could it only come to them. The ordinary locust has no sting; this has. It represents the sting of sin, which destroys peace. It is, however, difficult to harmonize this view with the expression "five months." The conjectures as to its meaning are, naturally, as diverse as the various Apocalyptic explanations. It is most probably intended to imply a *short* period in contrast to the "everlasting gospel." Many forms of error, which once moved the masses, have now become mere words, as we hope those of to-day may become; but they bring acute misery upon those whom they affect, and this is imaged by the scorpion-sting—"the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man." Mr. Wood, in his valuable work on natural history, says that "of all the spider race, the scorpions are most dreaded, and justly so. These strange beings are at once recognized by their large claws and the armed tail. This member is composed of six joints, the last being modified into an arched point, very sharp, and communicating with two poison glands in the base of the joint. With this weapon the scorpion wounds its foes, *striking* smartly at them, and by the same movement driving some of the poison into the wound: The pain is most severe, and the health much injured for the time, the whole limb throbbing with shooting pangs, and the stomach oppressed with overpowering nausea."

A further description follows, which we must, I think, postpone the consideration of till our next Instruction. It will be sufficient here to say that, suggested as it is by the appearance of the locusts, it is all symbolical, and fits in exactly with the nature, character, and results of anti-christian error.

What we have to do is, remembering these sore judgments of Almighty God, to be ourselves ever on the watch

against anything that may tend, in ourselves or others, towards departure from the faith, or towards weakening it or toning it down; against worldly maxims, which are often opposed, in subtle and specious way, to God's revelation; against "anythingarianism," or "nothingarianism;" against irreligious æstheticism, and many another thing, perhaps attractive in itself, in place of a Christ deposed! All of us who have our eyes open can see that the tendency of much modern life and thought is, undoubtedly, in the direction I have indicated. There is a school which is most attractive, which eschews the low, and the mean, and the vicious, and the unmanly, but it is a school in which Christ reigns not; it is without Christ, without His Church, without His sacraments. "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before" (St. Matt. xxiv. 24, 25).

There is another school described in "Barabbas." "The animal man, blindly conscious of the creative soul of the universe, yet doubting all manifestations of that soul, and thrusting his own narrow fears and scepticisms forward to obstruct and bar out the very presence of the eternal."¹ Lies vulgar and lies refined, errors common or errors æsthetic, all cost little trouble to keep up. "It is the nature of error to propagate itself in endless forms, but the truth will need testifying to and fighting for and dying for through ages yet to come."¹

The test of all spiritual fabrics is their capacity to stand the strain of wild and rough experiences! "The Catholic Church through all vicissitudes has yet endured. Body after body naming the Name of Christ have arisen, and seemed to succeed better than the Church for a time—generally through some defect in her teaching or character: for it has been generally through the fault of the Church that they have arisen, and on the neglect of the Church's duty that they have spread. But these bodies have not exhibited lasting-power. Any great catastrophe which, as it were, shatters the structure of human society down to its foundations, brings to nought multitudes of enterprises which seemed successful. But there is one society which has exhibited a marked capacity for lasting, which, after

¹ M. Corelli, "Barabbas," p. 388.

whatever vicissitudes, has shown that it has still the power of recovery and persistence. This is that Church which is rooted on the word of Christ, which has the succession from His apostles, in which are administered His sacraments according to His appointment, which holds to His apostolic tradition, and appeals back to His sacred Scriptures.

“That is the test—to last !”¹

¹ “The Sermon on the Mount: A Practical Exposition,” by Canon Gore, p. 185.

INSTRUCTION XXI.

CHAPTER ix. 7-15.

7 And the shapes of the Locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle, and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.

8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of Lions.

9 And they had breast-plates, as it were breast-plates of iron, and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

10 And they had tails like unto Scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.

11 And they had a king over them, which is the Angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name || Apollyon.

|| That is to say, A destroyer.

12 One woe is past, and behold there come two woes more hereafter.

13 And the sixth Angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God,

14 Saying to the sixth Angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four Angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15 And the four Angels were loosed, which were prepared || for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

|| Or, at.

7 And the ¹shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared for war; and upon their heads as it were crowns like unto gold, and their faces

¹ Gr. like-
nesses.

8 were as men's faces. And they had hair ^{as} the hair of women, and their teeth were as *the teeth* of lions.

9 And they had breast-plates, as it were breast-plates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing

10 to war. And they have tails like unto scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men five months.

11 They have over them as king the angel of the abyss: his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek *tongue* he hath the name ²Apollyon.

² That is, Destroyer.

12 The first Woe is past: behold, there come yet two Woes hereafter.

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard ³a voice from the horns of the golden altar which is before God, one saying to the sixth angel, which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound at the great river Euphrates.

³ Gr. one voice.

14 And the four angels were loosed, which had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, that they should kill the third part of men.

WE proceed to consider the further description of the locusts. A descriptive passage from one of the works of Monsieur Jules Verne is very interesting: "Although there was no lack of agencies at work for their destruction, their aggregate defied all check. The birds, with hoarse cries, darted down from above and devoured them greedily; from below the snakes consumed them in enormous quantities; the horses, buffaloes, mules, and dogs fed on them with great relish; and lions, hyænas, elephants, and rhinoceroses swallowed them down by bushels. The very Bushmen welcomed these 'shrimps of the air' like celestial manna; the insects even preyed on each other, but their numbers still resisted all sources of destruction."

As to their appearance, "'If you carefully consider the head of the locust,' says Theodoret, a bishop in Syria, 'you will find it exceedingly like that of a horse.' Whence the Arabs of old, and to this day, say, 'In the locust, slight as it is, is the nature of ten of the larger animals: the face of a horse, the eyes of an elephant, the neck of a bull, the horns of a deer, the chest of a lion, the belly of a scorpion, the wings of an eagle, the thighs of a camel, the feet of an ostrich, the tail of a serpent.'"¹

In the description immediately before us the similarity they bear to other things is emphasized; the expression, "like unto," or "as," is common to each simile, excepting, perhaps, that of the stings in their tails: see Revised Version.

(1) They are *like unto* horses prepared for war, seeming to assure their side of victory.

(2) They have upon their heads *as it were* crowns like unto gold, therefore not a true, but a counterfeit authority.

(3) Their faces are "*as* men's faces," suggesting the *appearance* of human wisdom, and sagacity, combined with the spirit of devils.

(4) Their hair is "*as* the hair of women" (the antennæ of the locusts have been compared to the hair of girls), implying (for we are speaking of the evil side of things) all the allurements of seeming beauty to beguile.

(5) Their teeth are *as* the teeth of lions; in spite, therefore, of their apparent womanly tenderness, they are really cruel. The teeth of the locust are said to be harder than stone.

¹ See Dr. Pusey's "Commentary on the Minor Prophets," on Joel ii. 4.

(6) They have breastplates, *as it were* breastplates of iron, *i.e.*, I imagine, the defence and protection of the world-powers, which are yet no real protection: see Jer. xvii. 5, 7.

(7) The sound of their wings is *as* the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to war. Mr. Wood says, "The peculiar sound produced by the champing of the leaves, twigs, and grass-blades can be heard at a considerable distance. When they take to flight the rushing of their wings is like the roaring of the sea, and as their armies pass through the air, the sky is darkened as if by black thunder-clouds." They make a mighty noise in the world.

(8) They have tails *like unto* scorpions, and stings; the end of their work, with all its specious appearance, is that at last it "stingeth like an adder." In this respect they are, as we have seen, unlike the natural locusts. They are so, too, in that they have a king over them, which the locust has not (Prov. xxx. 27). This king is expressly stated to be the angel of the abyss, that is, Satan, "The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." He is the king of all that is antichrist, and exercises rule over all the powers of darkness. His name is given us in two languages, just as the name of his conqueror, "The King of the Jews," was given in three. In Hebrew he is "Abaddon;" the term means "Destruction" (from the Hebrew "Abad," "Lost"), as it is indeed his business and employment to destroy. The word is used in the original in Job xxvi. 6; xxviii. 22; Psa. lxxxviii. 11; and Prov. xv. 11. He is himself destruction personified. In Greek he is "Apollyon," "The Destroying One." "The thief cometh not but that he may steal, and kill, and destroy. I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."

Here let me say that, without controverting other views more or less fanciful, I would suggest that the larger and fuller meaning, corresponding with that which we are keeping before us in these Instructions, is one suited to Christendom at all times, and never more powerfully than now. Men will find, if they put themselves into the hands of *any* antichrist, that it is "an evil and a bitter thing to depart from the living God." National and individual suffering *must* be the result to the nation and to the

individual, of national and individual sin; unfaithfulness to the Catholic Faith is a certain forerunner of sorrow.

"The first woe" (Greek, "the one woe") "is passed: behold, there come yet two woes hereafter." These are, probably, the words, not of the eagle, but of St. John. The style of the interpolation is familiar to us in his holy Gospel. It will help us if we notice that ch. xi. 14 is the extreme boundary line of this second woe; in fact, it really ends at the close of this chapter; but if it were not placed where it is, we might imagine that chs. x. and xi. 1-14 belonged to the third woe, instead of being, as they are, consolatory visions.

Now, the first woe proceeds, as we have seen, from the abyss, and from the fallen angel. The second is from another source, from a voice from the horns of the golden altar which is before God. The Greek is "one voice." There can be, I think, little doubt that we have here the answer:

(a) To the cry of the martyrs in ch. vi. 9, 10, and—

(b) To the incense-accompanied plea revealed to us in ch. viii. 3, 4. The altar of incense made of shittim wood, and overlaid with gold, is clearly the one meant here. It had, like the altar of burnt offerings, four horns. Exod. xxx. 2. These expressing, as they do, the idea of power, and that in all directions, are beautifully emblematical—

(a) Of the power of The One Great Sacrifice, and—

(b) Of the power of The One Great Intercession. Here particularly is set forth the power of prayer through that One ceaseless Mediation and Intercession. The special prayer has been, as we have already noticed, not for unholy vengeance, but for the assertion and championship of the right; and for help against the foes of Christ and His Church. "Arise, O God, maintain Thine own cause;" "Be Thou our help in trouble, for vain is the help of man." The four horns (the number is omitted in the Revised Version) suggest the thought of the answers to the prayers which go up from every quarter of the globe, and it is worthy of notice that we have *four* angels loosed, and later on (in v. 21) four specific sins mentioned. Remember again that "four" is the world-number. We must divide this "woe" into two episodes. Chs. x. and xi. 1-14 form a digression for the sake of

affording consolation to the faithful. The rest of ch. ix. is taken up with a description of the agents employed by God; though St. John did not count them, he heard the number: two hundred millions, an inconceivable host. Prior to this revelation, however, the sixth angel is bidden by the one voice, the *one* answer to the universal prayers, to loose the four angels which are bound at the great river Euphrates. We must be careful how we interpret this, as it will furnish the key to similar expressions in the whole vision. I think we must take the river as symbolical.

(a) It is spiritually, as it was literally, the boundary line between Israel and the outside world. God's promise to Abraham, "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates,"¹ was repeated to Moses and to Israel. "Turn you, and take your journey, and go to . . . the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates. Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them."² And yet again, to the Israelites under Joshua, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, . . . shall be your coast."³ This promise was partially fulfilled in David's time, and completely so in Solomon's. See 2 Sam. viii. 3; 1 Kings iv. 21; 2 Chron. ix. 26, with the marginal note. Then—

(b) It is the river on which Babylon was situated. It may be as well, therefore, to declare here the interpretation which I propose to attach to the term "Babylon." One very common view, among a large class of commentators, is to look upon it as portraying the Church of Rome. If there were no other arguments against this, the passage in ch. xviii. 21 is, in my judgment, fatal to it. Rome has, indeed, been frightfully guilty in the shedding of the blood of the saints, and is still an erring Church, not only in living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith. But I imagine that even the most ultra-Protestant would hesitate before he laid at Rome's door the sin of

¹ Gen. xv. 18.² Deut. i. 7, 8.³ Josh. i. 3, 4.

the blood of *all* that have been slain upon the earth ! Language of a similar sort is applied by our Lord to apostate Jerusalem. St. Matt. xxiii. 35. No ; as the bride, the Lamb's wife, is the faithful Church as a whole, as the "woman," in ch. xii., is the true Church, so Babylon is the harlot, the false Church, not in Rome only, but everywhere. A frightful curse has she been, and will she be in the results of her falsehoods upon the world. Holy Scripture is full of the parallel between the unfaithfulness of the Church to God, and that of a wife to her husband, between literal and spiritual adultery. In all love and kindness I ask, "Has ultra-Protestantism no share in the guilt, with its terrible disruption of the Church Catholic, which has done infinite harm to the spread of truth and to practical religion?" Professor Milligan has some weighty words on this point, when he says, "We have in the great harlot-city neither the Christian Church as a whole, nor the Romish Church in particular ; but all who, anywhere within the Church, profess to be 'Christ's little flock,' and are not—denying in their lives the main characteristic by which they ought to be distinguished, that they follow Christ."

The harm such do is unspeakable. We are now to see this element of evil carried to its ultimate issue, apostasy, and in active operation. May its appalling results make us more careful than ever how we hold fast and "contend for" the faith "once for all delivered unto the saints," and how we enthrone Christ in our hearts as their one supreme Lord ; Him, and Him only ; His strength, His grace, His doctrine, His faith, His Church, His sacraments, Himself !

In Him these two articles of our faith are inseparable—"I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ," and "I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church."

INSTRUCTION XXII.

CHAPTER ix. 16 TO x. 4.

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire and of Jacinth, and brimstone, and the heads of the horses were as the heads of Lions, and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone.

18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone which issued out of their mouths.

19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, *and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

10 And I saw another mighty Angel come down

16 And the number of the armies of the horsemen was twice ten thousand times ten thousand: I heard the number of

17 them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates *as* of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone: and the heads of the horses are as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceeded fire and smoke and

18 brimstone. By these three plagues was the third part of men killed, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone, which proceeded out of their mouths. For the power of the horses is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails are like unto serpents, and have heads; and with them

20 they do hurt. And the rest of mankind, which were not killed with these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship ¹devils, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk: and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

10 And I saw another strong angel coming

* Ps.
115. 4.
& 135.
15.

¹ Gr.
demons.

from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow *was* upon his head, and his face *was* as it were the Sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.

2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,

3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a Lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

down out of heaven, arrayed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire;

2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon

3 the earth; and he cried with a great voice, as a lion roareth: and when he cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices.

4 And when the seven thunders uttered *their* voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying, Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

We have already seen that, prior to the two episodes connected with the second "woe," we have a description of the agents employed. If "Babylon" represents the whole body of apostate Christendom, the "four angels," bound until God's appointed time has fully come, represent this apostasy in its active results. They "had been prepared" to "kill the third part of men," a step in the progressive judgments of God. It is to be allied with ch. viii. 7, 9, and 11, and *men* are now to suffer, and that unto death, in the same proportion as the trees and ships, and creatures which were in the sea, have suffered before. The preparation is clearly stated to have been for an appointed time; compare, again, St. Matt. xxiv. 36, "Of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only." The chronological calculations made to suit the many interpretations are doubtless very interesting, but it seems to me that what is meant is simply a time fixed in the Divine mind to an hour; it is a certain hour in a certain day of a certain month in a certain year. We have a similar expression in Acts ix. 11, where the particular care of God for the one individual is beautifully shown.

We next come to the description of the huge host of

horses and horsemen, in which the colour of the breastplates of the one corresponds with that which issues from the mouths of the other, "jacinth" being "hyacinth colour," such as proceeds from burning brimstone. Just as the locusts already described were more terrible than any simply earthly ones, so these horses are. Their heads are like those of lions, eager to rush on their prey. The horse was to the Jew an object of terror, and allied with the idea of war. By the fire, the smoke, and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths, the third part of men were killed. Some seem to think that we have here a reference to the Mahometan invasion of Christendom; but we must be careful to note that Mahomet, though indeed an antichrist, and a type of antichrist, is not the exhaustive fulfilment of the prophecy, which is an exhibition of the moral evils resulting from apostasy in every aspect. We are next introduced to another extraordinary description of these agents of God's judgments; "their power is in their tails, as well as in their mouth;" it would seem, by the construction of the passage, that each of the horses has more than one tail; each tail is like a serpent, and the end of the tail is like a serpent's head; with this they hurt, with their mouth they *kill* (as a serpent with poisonous and venomous fangs), poisoning the minds of men with error and idolatry; "and the rest of mankind," *i.e.* the ungodly, the men who, in v. 4, are described as "not having the seal of God on their foreheads," yet repented not; they are like Pharaoh after all his plagues; after all the terrible judgments around them "they repented not of the works of their hands," *i.e.* not simply of their sinful habit of living, but of their idolatries, their idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk, which their own hands had made. Of course spiritual idolatry, the putting any one or anything in our hearts in the place of God is included: see Col. iii. 5; 1 St. John v. 21. The devil-worship is rather demon-worship, that of false gods of an evil order, or their own presiding genius, and so on. See 1 Cor. x. 20, where the word translated "Sorceries" is allied to the word translated "witchcraft." In Gal. v. 20 it is there placed next to idolatry. "Fornication" is here to be taken literally as well as spiritually, and it is, noticeably, in the singular number. An impure heart is a

continuous sin. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

CHAPTER X.

We have now to contemplate the former of two visions of consolation, occupying a place corresponding with that of chs. iv., v., and vii., and intended to comfort God's people through all the "fiery trial" that is to try them. Its general scope furnishes us with another parallel with the discourse of Our Lord upon the four last things, for it is an enlargement of St. Matt. xxiv. 9, and x. 22. It seems to be in connection with prophesying, *i.e.* bearing testimony. St. John thus becomes the type, not simply of every one ordained bishop, priest, or deacon, but of every individual Christian, who by word, life, and example testifies to the truth which he has first received and assimilated himself. It is not every one that can *argue*; some, at all events, will do more harm than good by attempting it; but all can testify. The imagery of the chapter is clearly allied to Ezek. iii. The truths of God received into our souls are "sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort," but the results are often bitter, not only in a clearer insight into the "exceeding sinfulness of sin," in repentance, and in chastisement, but in our treatment at the hands of the world. "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you." "Set thyself to do good," says a philosopher, "and thou shalt have happy moments, and bitter hours." There is also, no doubt, the thought, parallel to St. Matt. xxiv. 12, and connected with apostasy. The very sweetness of God's Word of reconciliation bitterly emphasizes the sin of those who reject it. Read another parallel in St. Luke xxi. 12-16. Our hopes of heaven, the comforts which in the multitude of our sorrows refresh our souls, are one thing; but to the natural man (whom the expression in v. 10 represents), the accompaniments of the cross are bitter. The main point to be remembered is yet another parallel: St. Matt. xxiv. 13. In the case either of Church or individual nothing can really touch to hurt the "life that is hid with Christ in God."

"Another strong angel . . . with a loud voice" seems clearly to point to the angel mentioned in ch. v. 2, and

not to another similar to the four just let loose : that he is described as "coming down out of heaven," points to his being a good angel. He is "arrayed with a cloud," *i.e.* invested with judgment; the definite article is before "rainbow," therefore it is the one already mentioned in iv. 3, impressing the fact that mercy is covenanted to God's people in the midst of His judgments upon His foes. "He hath been alway mindful of His covenant and promise which He made to a thousand generations." "His face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire," in the former aspect, therefore, resembling our Lord at His transfiguration (St. Matt. xvii. 2), the sun being the emblem of glory. The angel is not Christ, but His representative, and so has many further aspects corresponding with those of Christ: see especially ch. i. The "pillars of fire" probably correspond also with Ezek. i. 7, and represent either steadfastness, or the presence and power of God, especially in His just judgments. The "little book open" is in his *left* hand, as the other is used in v. 5. It is, of course, another roll-book. The differences between it and that in ch. v. are—

(1) This is little as compared with that ;

(2) This is open, while that is sealed ;

(3) This is *in* the hand, the other was on it. We are told nothing of its contents ; it is for St. John and those who follow him to make it known ; "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." He who walks obediently will sooner or later have the proof, if he can bear it. Christ is pledged to satisfy if only we go on, in spite of all hindrances and disappointments, and failures, hungering and thirsting. The right foot upon the sea, and the left upon the earth, indicate not only authority over the whole world, but also, as a consolation to the faithful, supremacy over the place whence—

(a) The beast with seven heads, and

(b) The beast with two horns like a lamb, are to proceed (see ch. xiii. 1, 11). The "great voice, as a lion roareth," is appropriate to the representative of the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" (compare Amos iii. 8). "The seven thunders" then utter their voices, as though they were an echo of His loud cry ; seven probably represents their completeness, intensity, and unity of object ; they accompany the opening of the seventh seal, the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and the outpouring of the

seventh vial: see chs. viii. 5; xi. 19; xvi. 17, 18. They are the voices of God; they are set forth in their seven-fold description in Psa. xxix. St. John was then about to write what the thunders had uttered, as he had been instructed in ch. i. But a voice came to him from heaven forbidding this, and telling him to seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered. They were great and terrible, no doubt, but like the good things "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man," they are to be sealed. Just as too bright a vision of glory might unfit us for practical life here, so this vision "of lamentations, and mourning, and woe" might drive us into morbid ponderings over the evil to come.

This seems the best place to close this Instruction. It is evident that a great mystery hangs over the final conflict with antichrist. St. Augustine notes that both St. John and St. Paul seem to have known much about it which has been hidden from succeeding generations. It may, perhaps, be hardly difficult to see the reason. In his First Epistle, St. John thus writes: "Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest how that they all are not of us. Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, even he that denieth the Father and the Son." Defections from the Catholic Faith are forms of antichrist. "Even now are there many antichrists;" but if our eyes were open to see all the details of the last struggle, with all its terrors, would not our faithfulness in the minor conflicts be endangered, and our insight into them impaired? If, in the earlier parts of our lives, all that we have had to go through in the way of pain, sorrow, and disappointment had been revealed, which of us is there who would not have had the usefulness of our lives greatly lessened? So here, with a great danger imminent, God mercifully hides the future from our eyes, and bids us place implicit trust in His unchanging wisdom, and love, and in His infinite knowledge; He sees and knows all, and so we put out again our feeble hands into His strong grasp, with the prayer, for Church and individual, "Hold Thou me up,

and I shall be safe ;” “ O hold Thou up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not ;” and the answer to the faithful and to the trusting comes back, “ No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper ; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness which is of Me, saith the Lord ” (Isa. liv. 17). But no words can form a more beautiful commentary upon the whole passage than that afforded us in Psa. xci. Read the two passages side by side, and then thank God, and take courage !

The following lines furnished to me by a friend, seem not to be inappropriate for insertion here, full as they are of hope and encouragement to us amid the trials of life.

“THE JOY OF INCOMPLETENESS.

“ If all our lives were one broad glare
 Of sunlight clear, unclouded,
 If all our path were smooth and fair,
 By no soft gloom enshrouded ;
 If all life’s flowers were fully blown
 Without the sweet unfolding,
 And happiness were rudely thrown
 On hands too weak for holding,
 Should we not miss the twilight hours,
 The gentle haze, and sadness ?
 Should we not long for storms and showers,
 To break the constant gladness ?
 If none were sick, and none were sad,
 What service could we render ?
 I think if we were always glad,
 We scarcely could be tender.
 Did our beloved never need
 Our patient ministration,
 Earth would grow cold, and miss indeed,
 Its sweetest consolation.
 If sorrow never claimed our heart,
 And every wish were granted,
 Patience would die, and hope depart,
 And life be disenchanted.
 And yet in Heaven is no more night !
 In Heaven is no more sorrow ;
 Such unimagined new delight
 Fresh grace from pain will borrow.
 As the poor seed that underground
 Seeks its true life above it,
 Not knowing what will there be found,
 When sunbeams kiss and love it ;
 So we in darkness upward grow,
 And look and long for Heaven,
 But cannot picture it below,
 Till more of light be given.”¹

¹ J. Besemeres.

INSTRUCTION XXIII.

CHAPTER X. 5 TO XI. 1.

5 And the Angel which I saw stand upon the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven,

6 And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.

7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh Angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the Prophets.

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go, and take the little book which is open in the hand of the Angel which standeth upon the sea, and upon the earth.

9 And I went unto the Angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, *Take it, and eat it up, and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

10 And I took the little book out of the Angel's hand, and ate it up, and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

5 And the angel which I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his right hand

6 to heaven, and sware by him that liveth ¹for ever and ever, who created the heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, ²and the sea and the things that are therein, that there shall

7 be ³time no longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the pro-

8 phets. And the voice which I heard from heaven, *I heard it* again speaking with me, and saying, Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel that standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

9 And I went unto the angel, saying unto him that he should give me the little book. And he saith unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as

10 honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and when I had eaten it, my belly was made

¹ Gr. *unto the ages of the ages.*

² Some ancient authorities omit *and the sea and the things that are therein.*

³ Or, *delay.*

* Ezek.
2. 8.
& 3. 3.

11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

11 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod, and the Angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the Temple of God, and the Altar, and them that worship therein.

11 bitter. And they say unto me, Thou must prophesy again ¹over many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.

11 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod : ²and one said, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

¹ Or, *concerning*.

² Gr. *saying*.

WE have seen for ourselves quite enough to justify the belief that the Apocalypse is an enlargement of our Lord's description of the last things. Once again do I draw your attention to a parallel, this time in St. Matt. xxiv. 22, "Except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." The strong angel with a great voice, with his right foot upon the place whence one beast, and his left on that whence the other is to arise, makes solemn oath, not that time is to come to an end, but that there is to be no more delay; in other words, the days, for the elect's sake, shall be shortened. The action of the angel is similar to that of Dan. xii. 4, 7, 9. But the declaration is different. In the one case there is specified delay, in this the assurance that there is to be none. The uplifting of the hand is a token of appeal to God, the All-True, to witness to the truth of what is sworn (see Gen. xiv. 22; Isa. lxxv. 16). The reference to the Great Creator helps us to the determination that the angel is Christ's representative, and not Christ Himself (see St. John i. 1, 2). It is also meant to assure us of His power to consummate the mystery, about which a declaration is made in v. 7. The word translated "declared" is used of *good* tidings only. In its substantive form, it is our word "Gospel," the "good news." It is "good news" to the suffering, waiting Church to know that there is a limit to her troubles, fixed in the mind of God. The "mystery of iniquity" is to be ended by the consummation of the "mystery of God," the final redemption of His Church, the coming of the Kingdom of Christ, and His universal reign. This is the "good tidings," the putting down of the usurper, the terminating of the evil, the establishing of the Right. It has been already

partially fulfilled in the spread of Christianity ; but we, as those in every preceding age, have yet to wait for the full completion, when "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever." All rests upon the oath of God (for the appeal is clearly admitted), just as God's promise to Abraham did, "When God made promise to Abraham, since He could swear by none greater, He swore by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee." God will more than make up to His Church all she has gone through for His sake. May our hearts be more and more directed into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ !

We have already noticed the signification of the eating of the little book (Instruction XXII., p. 137). The point to remember and to emphasize here is its complete *assimilation* (just as the object of our taking food is to assimilate it, and make our body strong). It is sweet to the tongue and to the taste, but bitter in the belly. We *must* take the bitter with the sweet. Just as there are many Church people who will gladly observe all the prescribed *feasts*, by whom the appointed fasts or days of abstinence, Lent, and Ember and Rogation Days, eves and vigils, and all the Fridays in the year, except Christmas Day, are either wholly or in great measure neglected ; so there are many who would have the Crown without the Cross, the kingdom of God without tribulation, salvation without repentance, reward without labour, wages without work, the sweet without the bitter. This cannot be. Besides the necessity of personal preparation for another home, there is, as we have already noticed, the bitterness of the sorrow to a faithful Churchman and Christian, in all the sufferings which are to come through this anti-christ or any other, in defections from the Christian faith ; yet the process of assimilation is to be *entire* : "Take it, and eat it *up*," so that it become a part of thy being. The book, presumably containing the revelation of God's will and purpose to the Church, and to the individual soul, is to find correspondence in our own will and purpose ; so the eating it up means submission to the will of God in all things, great or small, in happiness or sorrow. The union between the Heavenly Bridegroom and

His Bride the Church is to be "for better for worse, for richer for poorer," and this, not as in an earthly marriage, "till death us do part," for Jesus Christ is "the Resurrection and the Life," and "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall never die." With the fact that the little book was in St. John's mouth sweet as honey, compare *Psa. xix. 9, 10.* Referring, as this passage does, to the judgments of God, it affords a striking parallel.

The whole passage is full of special import to those who hold Christ's commission, which here seems to be renewed to St. John, with a fresh consecration, which is expressed in the last verse of this chapter. "Whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear," we must deliver ourselves the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth, the Catholic Truth, the faith of our fathers from Pentecost downwards, free from the additions of Rome on the one side, and the subtractions of ultra-Protestantism on the other. It is Truth for "many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings," and doubtless for all subjects, both rich and poor; and whatever be the result of our testimony, sad or joyful, pleasing or displeasing, the Whole Truth is to be testified to before all.

An additional revelation comes with the new consecration. Well might St. John's spirit have sunk at the bitter prospect, without the enabling strength of God! The same will be given to us, as it was to him, if only we are faithful to our commission. In our teaching may we add nothing to the truth nor diminish aught therefrom.

CHAPTER XI.

This chapter contains the second consolation to the Church in all the trials she has to undergo. It will best explain itself as we proceed. We shall find frequent allusions to that which is to follow, but shall be chiefly engaged with that which sets forth the history of the Church in the world. The two visions, (*a*) That of the measuring of the temple, and (*b*) That of the two witnesses who were faithful unto death, and triumphant over it, come between the sixth and seventh trumpet, just as the two visions of the sealing of the 144,000, and of the great multitude standing before the Throne and before the Lamb, come between the sixth and seventh seal. This measuring

of the temple we find previously in Holy Scripture in detail in Ezek. xl. *et seq.*; while we must not pass over Zech. ii. 2. Notice that just as there were three parts of the tabernacle, so three parts of the temple are to be measured—

(1) The sanctuary, including the “Holy of holies;”

(2) The altar, *i.e.* almost without doubt the altar of incense, because the altar of burnt-offering was outside in the court of the people. We must remember that it is the altar upon which the prayers of all the saints are offered (viii. 3), and it is with saints in their trials and persecutions that this vision of consolation has to do;

(3) “Them that worship therein,” showing clearly that the measuring is metaphorical; the idea is that of consecration and dedication, as in our own system of consecration of churches, etc. That which is left out, “The court which is without the temple,” is, therefore, to some extent, connected with what is secular. The idea suggested is rather that of *desecration* than of non-consecration, for this outer court is still part of the temple or tabernacle proper, though not part of the sanctuary. It would seem to indicate—

(1) Unfaithful members of the true Church, men who “hold the Truth in unrighteousness,” like the branches “*in Christ*” which bear no fruit. This explanation seems to follow on the lines of Holy Scripture (see 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17, and vi. 19). In all three cases the Greek should be translated “sanctuary.”

(2) There is also, I think, this meaning—the measurement corresponds with the sealing in ch. vii. As there is there the definite number 144,000, so here is the specific place, God’s sanctuary, dear above all other places to the pious Israelite. But Israel has sinned, and “through their fall salvation has come unto the Gentiles,” who do not belong to God’s Old Testament Church, and upon whom the Law given from God by Moses, so far as ceremonies and rites are concerned, is not binding. The outer court, then, given over to the Gentiles and unmeasured, corresponds with “the great multitude which no man *could* number;” and the Holy City, which is to be literally restored (signs of the near approach of this being almost daily more and more apparent), is to be trodden

down for a *definite* period, fixed in God's counsels, "Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

But we have not fully answered the question, "What is meant by the measurement?" though we have already seen that the underlying idea is that of consecration. Bishop Wordsworth considers that the reed, which is the instrument, is the same in meaning as the Hebrew word from which our expression "canon"¹ comes. Holy Scripture thus becomes the measuring reed; but may it not be rather that which is called by our Lord "an honest and good heart," which only God can test by His standard, the test of obedience to His will? the earnest searching after holiness, the inner "life hid with Christ in God," the life of repentance, confession, and trust in Christ, which remains faithful to God's truth and lives up to it; which "does justly, and loves mercy, and walks humbly with its God"? "The Lord knoweth them that are His;" "I the Lord search the hearts;" "Judgment will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet." How such a thought as that of God's standard touches us all! There is so much to mourn over and regret; the older we grow the more does sin appear to be exceeding sinful! The holier we grow, the more do we feel how short we come of the Divine measurement: "If Thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it?" If we look at ourselves, it all appears more and more hopeless. Let us, then, with penitence, and intention of newness of life, look away from ourselves and up to Christ, with the prayer, prompted alike by the knowledge of the deceitfulness of our own heart, and of the measurement of the heart-searcher, "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed: save me, and I shall be saved" (see Jer. xvii. 9, 10, 14).

"That it may please Thee to give us true repentance; to forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances; and to endue us with the grace of Thy Holy Spirit, to amend our lives according to Thy Holy Word; We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord." "The Lord grant unto us to find mercy of the Lord in that day" (2 Tim. i. 18).

¹ For a very able and learned inquiry into the meaning and history of this word, see Westcott on "The Canon of the New Testament," Appendix A.

INSTRUCTION XXIV.

CHAPTER xi. 2, 3.

† Gr. cast out.	2 But the Court which is without the Temple †leave out, and measure it not: for it is given unto the Gentiles, and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.	2 And the court which is without the temple †leave without, and measure it not; for it hath been given unto the nations: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.	¹ Gr. cast without.
Or, I will give unto my two witnesses that they may prophesy.	3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days clothed in sackcloth.	3 And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.	

IN dwelling on the preceding part of this chapter, we have already noticed the parallel between the visions of the trumpets and the seals, and have also compared the measuring with the sealing—a definite number of faithful Israelites and an indefinite number of faithful Gentiles. There is now to be brought before us the experience of those, whether Churches or individuals, who prophesy, *i.e.* bear testimony, for Christ. It means suffering: “If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you;” but support under the trials, and final conquest, are assured. This thought must, indeed, be kept carefully before us while we are considering the whole of this second vision of consolation. We have, however, first of all, to determine what is meant by the statement that the Gentiles shall tread the holy city under foot “forty and two months.” The parallel with the “last things” is in St. Luke xxi. 24, “And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

It will be interesting to notice that we have precisely the same period of time occurring under different titles again and again, all going to prove, I think, beyond

question, that the expression is figurative: (1) Forty-two months; (2) twelve hundred and sixty days, which is forty-two months of thirty days each; (3) a time, times, and half a time, *i.e.* three and a half years; so that we have not three *different* periods, but one and the same expressed in days, months, and years; (4) three and a half years is about the time of Our Blessed Lord's perfect ministry—His own time of prophesying or bearing testimony. "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master." (5) It is half the "week" mentioned in Dan. ix. 27 (in which connection we may also notice the expression "three days and a half" in v. 9 of our present chapter): "He shall confirm the covenant with many for one *week*: and in the *midst of the week* (seven, the perfect number, *broken in two*) He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease: and for the overspreading of abominations He shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." Notice also Dan. vii. 8: "I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots; and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things"—a splendid type of world-power and antichrist. And v. 25 of the same chapter, which seems to set forth that which we see more and more clearly approaching every day: "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a *time and times and a dividing of time*." Thus is the world-power set forth in its *seeming* triumph; it looks as though it were victorious in every quarter, but it is only hastening to its own destruction, and is really broken and defeated. At Christ's crucifixion, the great enemy of souls apparently won a triumphant victory over the Son of man and our human race when Christ breathed His last upon the cross. Yet that death of Christ was only the passage to His glorious resurrection, which is the pledge of ours. So here is seen a corresponding blessed truth, alike in the history of Christ, and in that of His Church. (6) Three and a half years is the time during which the drought, and consequent famine, in Elijah's time smote the earth, and this is a point of figurative importance,

as we shall see (compare St. James v. 16, 17). (7) It is the duration of the pillage of the temple, and the waste of sacred things by Antiochus Epiphanes. In the First Book of the Maccabees, it is recorded that he "went up against Israel and Jerusalem with a great multitude, and entered proudly into the sanctuary, and took away the golden altar, and the candlestick of light, and all the vessels thereof, and the table of the shewbread, and the pouring vessels, and the vials, and the censers of gold, and the veil, and the crowns, and the golden ornaments that were before the temple, all which he pulled off."

That which seems to me to be clearly indicated is a time *fixed* in the Divine counsels to the very day, as we have already seen. And it is no part of our duty, as some would have us think, to attempt to fix the date of the completion of the Divine counsels. Such attempts lead only to absurd mistakes, and to constant shifting of argument, unsettling to the weak, and affording occasion of blasphemy and ridicule to the unbeliever. Is it not far wiser and better, from every point of view, to leave all to God Himself, and to try and "live each day as if the last"; to accept our Lord's statement that "of that day and hour knoweth no one"? Or again (very strikingly because of the witness-bearing), "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power; but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth"?

The time is fixed, and the Heavenly Father knows all; that is enough.

We now come to the revelation of the two witnesses, clothed in sackcloth, like Elijah, and St. John the Baptist. We read this description of the former: "He was a hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins." St. John the Baptist "had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins." Sackcloth was, as we all know, the outward emblem of mourning, and woe, and suffering. See Isa. xxii. 12. These witnesses, it is worthy of remark, are not *likened* to two olive trees, and two candlesticks, but are said to be "*the* two olive trees, and *the* two candlesticks," definitely, the article referring evidently to two well-known types. It

is worth notice, also, that the strict translation is not "my two witnesses," but "the two witnesses of *me*." The well-known type and reference is, almost certainly, Zech. iv. 11-14, which itself has reference to the "anointed" Joshua, the high priest (notice the opposition to him in Zech. iii. 1), and to Zerubbabel the ruler of the city, both of them God-appointed, and God-anointed witnesses for Him (there is also a reference to Zech. ii. 1, 2). Here we have another deeply interesting coincidence. It seems to be one of God's frequent plans to duplicate His witnesses. First, "that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established," and, secondly, for the mutual society, help, and comfort which such a plan affords. Compare Eccl. iv. 9, 10. Besides the instance already referred to, I have only to mention in the Old Testament, Joshua and Caleb, and Moses and Aaron, and in the New Testament the sending out of the disciples two and two, though they were few in number, and the whole world had to be evangelized.

Now the question arises, "Who are these two witnesses?" Some of the ancient Church have thought that *Enoch* and *Elijah* are meant. If *Enoch* is intended, we may refer to St. Jude 14, where we read that "Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His Holy Ones." The difficulty of these two witnesses dying a second time is certainly avoided by this interpretation, for both these holy men were translated that they should not see death; but it seems clear to me from what follows that *Moses* and *Elijah* are in the writer's mind. St. John had himself been a witness of the transfiguration, when "there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Jesus:" Moses represented the law, and Elias the prophets or the gospel, as Zerubbabel the ruler, and Joshua the high priest did in their generation. Moreover, in Mal. iv. 4, 5, Moses appears before us as God's servant, and Elias as His prophet. Compare also St. John i. 21: "When the Jews sent priests and Levites" to St. John the Baptist to ask him, "'Who art thou?' he confessed, and denied not, 'I am not the Christ.' And they asked him 'What then? Art thou Elias?' and he said, 'I am not: 'Art thou that prophet?' and he answered 'No.'" "That prophet" is the one foretold by Moses in Deut. xviii. 15, and referred to by St. Stephen

in Acts viii. 37. But I see no occasion to take the revelation immediately before us literally, any more than we have others; why, in a figurative book, should this passage be treated as an exception? The two witnesses are, in my judgment, men who embody the splendid faithfulness of Moses and Elijah. But if any are driven to the conclusion that Moses and Elijah are literally intended, the question arises, "Is it quite clear from Holy Scripture that Moses died?" If we take our English translation it seems so; but the Septuagint statement is very striking: see Deut. xxxii. 49, 50, and xxxiv. 5. In both these passages the Septuagint translators have, apparently of set purpose, used two different words to describe the "deaths" of Aaron and Moses. Aaron, it is stated, "died;" while Moses "finished his life." The possibility that he has not died is borne out in the next verse, Deut. xxxiv. 6; see also St. Jude 9. But, as I say, there seems to be no need to suppose that the *reappearance* and death of Elijah or any one else is intended. It would rather appear to be out of harmony with God's justice that such a man as Elijah, after being translated, should, after all, have to face death! Added to this argument it seems clear that men endowed, as St. John the Baptist was, with "the spirit and power of Elias," and with the faithfulness of Moses, will ever be raised up as occasion demands, in the defence of the Church. The Church itself can never die; it may be persecuted, but it will not be forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. The Church is not the establishment, but the living, organized, and endowed body of Jesus Christ, and *therefore* can never die.¹ Throughout its earthly history, faithful witnesses will be persecuted, but throughout it also they will be under the Divine protection. Even when that which we call "death" comes upon them, they rise again!² As with the Lord Himself, so with them. The apparent victory of the foe is changed into the glorious resurrection triumph of the persecuted: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

¹ Even in the case of the victory of Islam over some parts of the Eastern Church, it is apparent that their defeat was the inseparable result of their unfaithfulness and corruption. We look forward to the day when the saying of Moslem mothers to their children, that "this or that will come to pass as surely as a cross will be seen again on Santa Sophia," will be an accomplished fact. (See "A Wandering Scholar in the Levant," by David G. Hogarth, p. 101.)

² Compare Heb. xi. 4.

“Almighty and everliving God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate us Thy servants by Water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto us the forgiveness of all our sins; Strengthen us, we beseech Thee, O Lord,” for all our testimony, “with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in us Thy manifold gifts of grace; the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength; the spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and fill us, O Lord, with the spirit of Thy holy fear, now and for ever. Amen.”

INSTRUCTION XXV.

CHAPTER xi. 4-10.

* Zech.
4. 3, 11,
14.

4 These are the *two olive trees, and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the earth.

5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

8 And their dead bodies shall *lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9 And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to

4 These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth.

5 And if any man desireth to hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man shall desire to hurt them, in this manner

6 must he be killed. These have the power to shut the heaven, that it rain not during the days of their prophecy: and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they shall

7 desire. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that cometh up out of the abyss shall make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them.

8 And their ²dead bodies *lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.

9 And from among the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations do *men* look upon their

²dead bodies three days and a half, and suffer not their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. And they that dwell on the earth rejoice over them, and make merry; and they shall send gifts one

¹ Gr.
lamp-
stands.

² Gr.
carcase.

another, because these two Prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth.

WE prepared the way, in the last Instruction, for the passage which is to come under our consideration to-day. We are now at liberty to look into the details of the struggle. The "candlesticks" are, rather, as in the margin, "lamp-stands;" the meaning is obvious. Read St. Matt. v. 16, and Phil. ii. 15, 16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven;" "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." How could they, or how can we, do this? Only as the oil, supplied by God as it is to the olive tree, and through the tree to us, is sustaining the wick, which would otherwise be only "smoking flax." Here the parallel with Zech. iv. 11 is very striking, especially as we are reminded in Jer. xi. 16, and in Rom. xi., that the olive-tree is a metaphor of the Church. The candlesticks are pictured as "standing before the Lord of the earth," for, perhaps, a double reason: (1) of ministering, as Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, did before Him; and (2) doing His work as the righteous and faithful governor of the city, Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, did. The two are seen working together for God. Notice next that they are under God's special protection, for "If any man *will* hurt them" ("will" is not the future tense, but the verb of volition, rightly translated "desireth" in the Revised Version), "fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man shall desire to hurt them, in this manner must he be killed." The reference is clearly to Elijah in 2 Kings i. But I imagine that it is hardly literal fire which is here meant: the metaphor is a familiar one: "Behold, I will make My words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them" (Jer. v. 14), or, "Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of My mouth" (Hos. vi. 5). It is an illustration of judicial retribution; compare Jer. xxx. 16, "Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them,

shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey;" or, St. Matt. vii. 2, "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." The next reference is equally clearly to Elijah (see 1 Kings xvii. 1; and St. James v. 16, 17), and the next evidently to Moses—Pharaoh being the type of antichrist, who is the last and greatest foe of Israel. Compare Exod. vii. 19. I would, however, draw attention to the fact that in both cases the power given to these witnesses is so extended that it is to last during the whole time of their prophecy. Notice the expressions, "waters" (in the plural), "every plague," "as often as they shall desire."

Coming now to the statement, "when they shall have finished their testimony," etc., we note that there is a parallel between their experience and that of Our Blessed Lord. If we compare St. John's holy Gospel, this will be all the more striking. In St. John vii. 30, viii. 20, and xiii. 1, mention is made of the hour fixed in the Divine counsels, before which no one could lay hands upon our Lord; so here these witnesses are outside the reach of death at the hands of their enemies, *until* their testimony is finished. When it *is* finished, and the victory seems to be their enemies', it is really theirs.

Now we must decide what is meant by "the beast," or, as it should rather be, "wild beast." It will be seen that we are to meet with two, one rising out of the sea, as recorded in ch. xiii. 1, and the other out of the earth, as in ch. xiii. 11. This one ascends out of the abyss, to which your attention was directed in Instruction XX. Each "beast" seems to be a form of antichrist. If we interpret the expression in each case as a hostile world-power, then the ascent out of the abyss would signify that such a power is *employed by Satan*, as his instrument. His action is to correspond with that of the beast in Dan. vii. 21, 22. Archdeacon Lee says, "This is the last manifestation of unbelief; for a time, but for a short time, the world-power will extinguish the outward testimony of the Church, although the temple of God, and the altar, and they that worship therein, are still preserved by the Divine care." Nothing can destroy the life of the Church, although its testimony may be rejected for a time. Notice, because

it will prepare us for much that seems imminent, that *death* will not satisfy the vindictive malice of this beast-agent of the devil; the testifying representatives of the Church are to be kept from sepulture, and that in the open street. Their "dead bodies" (though the noun is in the original in the singular number, because the Church is one) "lie in the street of the great city, which *spiritually* is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified." "The great city" is, almost certainly, in some sense, Jerusalem; our Lord, it is true, was crucified "without the gate," but the site of the crucifixion was enclosed within the city wall by Constantine. But *literal* Jerusalem alone it cannot be. Jerusalem, "out of" which, as our Lord, with righteous sarcasm, says, "it cannot be that a prophet perish," is but the type of the place where they perish as He did. They go, as He did, to gather her children together, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and with similar results. "Sodom" is probably mentioned because of just Lot, "vexed by the filthy conversation of the wicked," himself a type of the Church in the midst of the world; and "Egypt," as furnishing a still more striking type of God's Church, suffering under the cruel hand of a persecuting world-power. Notice in both cases the deliverance. Jerusalem was, is, and is to be, the scene, *spiritually*, of a similar persecution. Jesus Christ "was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own (property), and they that were His own (people) received Him not." His witnesses have a kindred experience; Jerusalem spiritually is the scene of the rejection of God's revelation; it is the vineyard to which the heir and his messengers were sent, with the well-known result. Isaiah uses a similar metaphor. "Except the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah. Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah;" and Ezekiel another forcible one, in ch. xvi. 44, and especially 48. So, too, our Lord's language is very striking, "Whosoever shall not *receive* you, nor *hear your words*, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city."

See also St. Matt. xi. 23, 24. Egypt is too well known a type to need further comment. We may, then, I think, safely say that these three features are to be looked for in any fulfilment, partial or complete, of this revelation: (1) general corruption, as in Sodom; (2) general tyranny, as in Egypt; (3) pretended sanctity, as in Jerusalem. See St. John xvi. 2, "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God." We may, therefore, look for persecution to take the special form of a pretence of doing God's service. Notice that the people join in the persecution and in the indignity; for just as the white-robed multitude is made up of a great number out of every nation, and all tribes, and peoples, and tongues, so there are some from among the peoples, and tribes, and tongues, and nations, who join with the world-power in the insult and oppression. As regards the witnesses themselves, "They, being dead, yet speak!" The main point of the three and a half years is, I think, as before, a time in God's knowledge, fixed and definite, but, thank God, a limited one. "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." "They that dwell on the earth" are, according to our usual explanation, the ungodly. They will rejoice, with the world, over the apparent victory. The two prophets had *tormented* them; for their word was like fire, or like a sword, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Now that they are dead their enemies make merry, and send gifts one to another, as was the custom at great feasts. (See Neh. viii. 10-12, and Esther ix. 19.)

Surely we may all read here the distinct signs of the times! I doubt whether at any period in the Church's history there was so much rejection of her testimony *by the world* as there is now. The dividing line between her faithful children and the world is becoming more and more distinct. It is not only the open and avowed hostility of the vicious, which she will always have to face, but the subtle sophistry of so-called philosophy; "the idolatry of the law" without the Lawgiver, the polite, the attractive, the æsthetic opposition of refined agnosticism. Moreover, the world-power seems to be working distinctly for itself alone. The main object of many seems to be to set class

against class, instead of to promote "peace and happiness;" to do and say anything to catch votes rather than to uphold truth at all costs; to dangle robbery before the masses and call it justice; and to set creed against creed, instead of seeking that "religion and piety may be established among us for all generations." I believe it to be all clearly mapped out in this book. "Behold," says Christ, "I have told you before." Grant us, Lord, come what will, ever to be firmly, bravely, and faithfully on the right side; ready rather to perish with the faithful witnesses, than to rank, at any apparent temporal advantages, with the world!

INSTRUCTION XXVI.

CHAPTER xi. 11 TO END.

11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them: and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them.

13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain †of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second woe is past, and behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

15 And the seventh Angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.

16 And the four and twenty Elders which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is

11 And after the three days and a half the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which beheld them.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they went up into heaven in the cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell; and there were killed in the earthquake ¹seven thousand persons: and the rest were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second Woe is past: behold, the third Woe cometh quickly.

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, The kingdom of the world is become *the kingdom* of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign ²for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces, and worshipped

17 God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, which art and which wast; because thou hast taken thy great power, and didst reign.

18 And the nations were

† Gr.
names
of men.

¹ Gr.
names
of men,
seven
thou-
sand.

² Gr.
unto the
ages of
the ages.

|| Or,
corrupt.

come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the Prophets, and to the Saints, and them that fear thy Name, small and great, and shouldest destroy them which ||destroy the earth.

19 And the Temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his Temple the Ark of his Testament, and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.

wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and *the time* to give their reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth.

19 And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his ¹covenant; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.

¹ Or,
testament.

THE Church, it will be remembered, has, in all her trials, the assurance that they are to be short-lived. The issue is in God's hands, and her ultimate triumph is assured and perfect. In our last Instruction we left the opposition in a condition of apparent triumph; but the triumph is but brief. "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live," is the prophet's cry of old, in the Name of the Lord God, over the dry bones in the open valley. Israel's restoration, there set forth, is the type of God's work in every age, alike for Church and individual. When God the Holy Spirit is duly honoured, then the restoration, *as His work*, begins.

As an illustration, think of the persecution which our Church has had to go through from time to time, bitter, unrighteous, and unjust persecution, with the result, among many others, that it has sent Churchmen to their knees. In this house of God, the petition has gone up daily that God would "defend His Church." We rejoice to know that that petition has been heard and answered by God; and danger has been averted. Meanwhile we must continue to urge the other part of our prayer—that God may "cleanse" the Church. If this be done, we may hope that it is saved for ever. If all the Church's persecutions and trials lead her in the same way to glorify and exalt the work of the Holy Spirit, there is absolutely no limit to her success. "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved. God shall help her, and that right early." Notice the close connection between the Church

and her Lord. She shares His trial, she shares His glory, too; *perfectly* in the great day of the King's espousals, the marriage supper of the Lamb, but in *anticipation* also in every restoration of the Church or of the individual. "Great fear" falls upon her opponents who, a short time ago, were rejoicing over her fall, just as at the tomb of the risen Lord, "the keepers did shake, and became as dead men, and there was a great earthquake." In like manner also as CHRIST is summoned to the right hand of the Majesty on high, and a cloud receives Him out of His disciples' sight, so are His people summoned, after faithful witness, and *the* cloud receives them! Thus the Church is seen not only risen with Christ, but potentially ascended with Him. Before the eternal throne He, the great High Priest, pleads her cause as "one with Him, and He one with her." Oh, what power would be hers if, at every celebration of the Holy Eucharist, she remembered this mighty union as a grand, as an *omnipotent*, fact! The triumph of right over wrong would soon cease to be merely a future hope; it would be a grand and growing present reality. Were Jesus thus exalted, we should have reason to cry, "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

In dealing with the remaining symbolism we must not forget that the Church's *final* triumph in her Lord is viewed as being *potentially* hers already. Judgments, such as are indicated by a great earthquake, fall upon the earth. A *definite* portion of the power of the opposing city is taken away, and a *definite* number of the Church's opponents destroyed, with the merciful result that the rest are led to repentance. The "seven" and the "thousand" are, according to our figurative explanation, both perfect and comprehensive numbers. Let the whole passage be an encouragement to us as individuals to remain faithful. Let the visions of consolation bid us look to the *end*, so that in all our sufferings here upon earth for the testimony of Christ's truth we may by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed, and bear all, and hope all, for His sake!

It will hardly be necessary for me to remind you that the visions of consolation have extended from ch. x. 1 to the present text, and we are now recalled to ch. ix. 21 and to that which follows, viz. the sounding of the seventh

trumpet. With this is allied the third woe, the greatness of the glory and triumph of the Church being the measure of the defeat of her enemies, although the *details* of the woe seem to be deferred, while the consummation of the Church's triumph, in and through Christ, is set before us.

"The great voices," as in v. 2, v. 12, vii. 10, etc., correspond with the greatness of the subject, and with the numbers of those who sing the glad tidings with unanimous acclaim. They are the more powerful in contrast with the silence which followed the opening of the *seventh seal*. The living creatures, typifying the whole creation, and the twenty-four elders representing the Church, doubtless join in and help to swell the mighty flood. "Heaven and earth and all creation, laud and magnify His Name." The anthem rises: "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ: and He shall reign for ever and ever." The word "kingdom," in the singular, suggests the thought of undivided sovereignty and government. Where the prince of this world, or the prince of the power of the air, have hitherto ruled, Jesus Christ governs, and that into the ages of the ages. "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ . . . whose kingdom shall have no end." *Worship* is, of course, an integral part of the result of this triumph. As the angels in ch. vii. 2, and as the seraphim in Isa. vi., so the Church here joins in the expression of the *worth* of Him who, always possessing the power, has now *taken* it.

Professor Milligan beautifully points out that, in reading, a comma is to be placed after the word "Lord," which presents us with the Name of Him who has thus triumphed and brought the troubles of His Church to an end. The Name "Lord" is then followed by three appellations, as in ch. iv. 8. (1) "God;" (2) "the Almighty;" (3) "which art and which wast," the third clause usually belonging to this last appellative, "which is to come," being now left out, because no longer needed—the Lord *is* come!

This part of the song of praise deals with the general statement that the Lord has *taken* to Him His great power. That power had indeed been always His, but for a time He had permitted His enemies to contend against it; He is to allow this no longer.

This is followed by a more minute description : as the kingdom of God has progressed, so has the hatred and wrath of His opponents, which now bursts forth in final effort, only to receive that which is set forth in the seventh trumpet, when the mystery of God is to be finished. We must place the "nation's anger" and "God's wrath" over against each other in forcible and terrible antithesis. It is a question whether we have here the general judgment or only that of the wicked ; but I lean personally to the former belief, involving, as it does, the vindication of the cause of the martyrs by God, and the reward of His servants, as well as the judgments upon the wicked. The reward is suitable, (1) to the prophets, including all those who, like the two witnesses, have testified for Christ in every age, and especially against antichrist ; then, (2) to the saints ; and (3) to them "that fear God's Name."¹ In every degree and class of society, as in every nation, "he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him."

Retribution in kind, such as we have previously noticed, follows.

Lastly, "There was opened the temple of God that is in heaven." It corresponds, in perfect antitype, to the typical tabernacle in the wilderness. It is not the temple as a whole, but "the holy place," as in v. 1. As the ark of God was deposited in the tabernacle, so here the ark of God's testament is seen in His sanctuary. It is the symbol of God's covenant with His people, which finds its full completion for us in the perfect life, and perfect death, and perfect present ministry of Jesus Christ. Thus everything for us, and His whole Church, rests upon God's pledge. When this vision is accomplished, then will God, in fullest terms, have "performed the mercy promised to our fathers, and have remembered His holy Covenant, the oath which He sware to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life."

"In the secret place of His tabernacle shall He hide them," and out of the same secret place of His tabernacle proceed His true and righteous judgments on His

¹ See Introductory Essay.

people's behalf. All this rests upon the pledge of Almighty God.

Let us, by way of conclusion, as an act of worship, and as a pledge to us of the terms of the New Testament covenant, recite together, very solemnly, the Nicene Creed, with a pause after the words, "whose kingdom shall have no end."

INSTRUCTION XXVII.

CHAPTER xii. 1-6.

|| Or,
sign.

12 And there appeared a great ||wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the Sun, and the Moon under her feet, and upon her head a Crown of twelve stars :

2 And she being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

3 And there appeared another ||wonder in heaven, and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth : And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron : and her child was caught up unto God, and to his Throne.

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand, two hundred, and threescore days.

12 And a great sign was seen in heaven ; a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars ;

2 and she was with child : and she crieth out, travailing in birth, and in pain to be delivered.

3 And there was seen another sign in heaven ; and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven

4 diadems. And his tail draweth the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth : and the dragon stood before the woman which was about to be delivered, that when she was delivered, he might devour her child. And

5 she was delivered of a son, a man child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron : and her child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that there they may nourish her a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

WE are now to have brought before us in powerful figurative language the three great enemies against which the Church has had to contend in all ages, in the conflict which must continue until all enemies are put under Christ's feet. Let us carefully keep in mind all through

that the ultimate issue in victory is assured to the faithful ; their pledge is Christ, who gained the victory Himself. "A great sign," rather than "a great wonder," is "seen in heaven," showing us very plainly that the language is figurative.¹ We are, however, at the very commencement, face to face with a difficulty. Who is the "woman"? There seems hardly any room to doubt that in some sense or other she figures God's Church. We are all of us familiar with the beautiful metaphor: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Or, again, with the glowing imagery of the forty-fifth Psalm, in which the Church is depicted as the bride of Christ; or yet again with the typical loves of Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Rachel. As Isaac sent forth to fetch his bride, and as Jacob served long years for Rachel, so—

"From heaven 'He' came and sought her
To be His holy bride,
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died."

The figure, therefore, is by no means an uncommon one; but we still have to face the question, "Who is the woman?" Is it the blessed Virgin Mary? Commentators, especially those of the ultra-Protestant order, shrink from this interpretation. This by itself, however, is no argument, for ultra-Protestantism, in its natural revolt from Roman error, has, over and over again, fallen itself into error, in the opposite extreme. There need be no *undue* exaltation, or glorification of the Virgin, if we say that this is she, the "highly-favoured of God," "the blessed among women," chosen to be the human agent of the great mystery of the Incarnation, in giving birth to the "seed of the woman," which was to bruise the serpent's head. That the child brought forth is the Messiah there can be no doubt, unless we dissociate Christ from the second Psalm, which is plainly Messianic. The difficulty is the flight into the wilderness

¹ The word in the original is one of great interest, especially from its use by St. John. Its exact meaning is shown by Archbishop Trench in his "New Testament Synonyms," p. 340. See also Dr. Maclear, on St. Mark vi. 2, in the Cambridge Greek Testament Series.

for the period of 1260 days. This is hardly met satisfactorily by the flight into Egypt, though one feels that the Herodian persecution, which necessitated this, is evidently before St. John's mind. Then, if we feel that this point is against us, and say that the woman is the Church, how can she be at once the mother and the bride of Christ? I venture to suggest that the woman here is the Old Testament Church, which has, in St. John's inspired view, all its hopes fulfilled in Mary's Blessed Child.¹ Mary herself is, then, the representative of the yearning and longing of the whole of God's chosen people. Christ Himself is the offspring, allied to, and identified with, His New Testament Church in all her conflict, and leading her on to victory. We must not confuse metaphors, and the marriage feast between Christ and His bride has yet to come. But there seems less confusion by this interpretation, than by others, and certainly no more than there is in the description of Christ as at once David's Son and David's Lord, "the Root and Offspring of David." The yearning to be delivered might be illustrated by many passages, such as Isa. xxvi. 15-19; lxvi. 7-13; Hos. xiii. 13, 14; and now we see the consummation of the hopes of the Old Testament Church, "unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given."

We notice next that (1) The woman is in heaven. This is, I think, part of the *sign*, and simply implies union with God, just as it is said of our union with Christ, "God hath quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up with Him, and made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (2) "She is arrayed with the *sun*," meaning, perhaps, that she is robed in the Light of Him who is Himself the Sun of Righteousness. (3) "The moon is under her feet." Light is above, and around, and beneath her; the Church, as the moon, can only shine with light borrowed from the sun. (4) "Upon her head a crown of twelve stars," twelve being the Church number; these form a crown of *victory*.

If I am correct in interpreting the figure as the Old Testament Church, we should go back naturally to the first *direct* promise, viz. that to Abraham, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This promise was sealed to Abraham by the supernatural

¹ See Introductory Essay.

birth of Isaac; it was doubly sealed to Isaac, and abundantly assured to Jacob in his twelve sons. Thus, "the sun" might be Jacob, "the moon" his wife, "the twelve stars" his twelve sons, one of whom used this very language: "Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars" (himself the twelfth) "made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" (Gen. xxxvii. 9, 10.)

We are then introduced to the first of our great enemies, the "dragon." "Red" is the colour of blood, and is an appropriate epithet of him who "is a murderer from the beginning;" the seven heads typify his rule over the kingdoms of the world, and the ten horns the cruelty and force which he employs. Compare 1 Kings xxii. 11, "Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the Lord, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them." And again, God's judgment between the fat and the lean cattle in Ezek. xxxiv. 21, "Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns," etc. Probably, too, both the horns and the heads signify the number of the agents and instruments which Satan is permitted by God to employ for a while. If so, the seven heads (seven being the Church number) are anti-christian powers, and the ten horns (ten being a world number) are his worldly instruments. The crowns, it should be noted, are not those of victory, such as the woman has, but diadems; these are symbols of royalty, appropriate to the "prince of this world," for this dragon, we are told below (v. 9), is he. He is described as "the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world."

In the next verse we must read "draweth" for "drew," expressing as it does the continuity of the devil's work, until he be finally cast down under our feet. "The third part of the stars of heaven" is, as before, not to be taken in numerical exactitude. I suppose primarily the rebellion in the empire of heaven is meant, in which angels sinned, and were cast down from their abodes of light. Then,

secondarily, remembering the continuity of Satan's power up till now, we probably have set forth all who, led by him, apostatize from The Faith, and fall away, though they once shined "as lights in the world." See Isa. xiv. 12-21. The parallel between the passage generally and Dan. vii. 7 and viii. 10 is obvious. "The dragon stood before the woman . . . that when she was delivered, he might devour her child." There may be a reference to the conduct of Pharaoh, when the Israelites multiplied in Egypt (note the expression "dragon" in Psa. lxxiv. 13), or to that of Herod, when, with a view of destroying the infant Jesus, he gave his cruel order for the murder of all the male children that were in Bethlehem and its borders, from two years old and under. The Revised Version goes on, "she was delivered of a son, a man child." Why this extraordinary form of expression?¹ As adapted by St. John, it may be: (1) Because it was the male children against whom both Pharaoh's and Herod's designs were planned, and thus the graphic nature of the picture is enhanced. (2) To impress us with the fact that Jesus was "Very Man." He is "about to rule," "on the point of ruling," *i.e.* to "tend as a shepherd," "all the nations with a rod of iron;" a plain allusion to the second Psalm, "Her child was caught up unto God, and unto His throne." We cannot doubt that St. John read into the Old Testament prophecy the Glorious Ascension of our Blessed Lord. It is not the idea of His own security and safety which is prominent, but that with Divine power He will *thence* destroy (*i.e.* from God's throne) the very evil one who would have destroyed Him! We must not forget that He and His Church are absolutely allied and associated in all this, so that all her power for overcoming is His first. "God hath made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." "The Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." It is from God and His throne that the perennial pentecostal gift comes. "Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and received gifts for men . . . and He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ;

¹ Here we trace the Hebrew original. See Introductory Essay.

till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”¹

If our interpretation of the “woman” as the Old Testament Church be correct, we shall see, in connection with verse 6, two or three interesting points which bear out this construction. The wilderness experience was that of God’s chosen people whom Pharaoh persecuted. It was that also of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom Herod assailed. It is the experience now of God’s ancient people Israel. They have gone astray in the wilderness, and are scattered throughout all lands; upon them has been fulfilled God’s prophecy, “I lifted up Mine hand unto them in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the nations, and disperse them through the countries; because they had not executed My judgments, but had rejected My statutes, and had profaned My sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers’ idols. . . . I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God,” etc., etc. (Ezek. xx. 23, 24, 35, 36, etc., R.V.). But “God hath not cast away His people, whom He foreknew.” They have been so marvellously preserved that they are represented in every city of the world, and will be so till “the fulness of the Gentiles be come in,” when all Israel will be saved, and the literal and spiritual Israel shall stand together, one Church in Jesus Christ! Here is yet another instance of the parallel with the discourse on the last things, “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (St. Luke xxi. 24). With the 1260 days we have already dealt.

Our concluding thoughts are those of deep thankfulness for such a revelation. The devil is a real adversary, a personal enemy to God, to His Church, and to ourselves. “Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist steadfast in the faith.” Never minimize, or think lightly of his power, or of his bitter hatred, nor expect to be free from conflict with the “crafts and assaults” which we associate

¹ Eph. iv. 8-13.

with him. Only remember that "*the Man Child*" rules! *He* rules in whom are hidden all the attributes of perfect humanity. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." Sin, and sin only, constitutes the devil's hold upon any man. This hold Christ was "manifested" to loosen. He does so by His precious blood and by His Grace, by absolution after confession, and on repentance. So may the most precious words fall on our ears with sweeter accents than ever at the Celebration: "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of His great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto Him; Have mercy upon you; pardon and deliver you *from* all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness; and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"Lift ye then your voices;
Swell the mighty flood;
Louder still and louder
Praise the precious blood."

INSTRUCTION XXVIII.

CHAPTER xii. 7-12.

7 And there was war in heaven, Michael and his Angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels,

8 And prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their Testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.

12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them; Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea: for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels *going forth* to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels; and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole ¹ world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying, ² Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accuseth them before our

10 God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death.

12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that ³ dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.

¹ Gr. *inhabited earth.*

² Or, *Now is the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom, become our God's, and the authority is become his Christ's.*

³ Gr. *tabernacle.*

“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” Upon this triumphant thought we based the conclusion of our last Instruction. Now the nature of this destruction is to be

set before us in graphic language, and is seen to be the result of the life and death, and present High-Priestly plea of the Man-child whom the woman brought forth. Bishop Wordsworth helps us to understand the reason why this picture is set before us here, when he writes, "St. John now reverts to an earlier period, in order to recite the antecedent history of the dragon, and to explain the circumstances under which he was led on to persecute the woman; and he traces that history till it is brought down, in v. 14, to the same point as in v. 6, viz. to the escape of the woman into the wilderness." In this Instruction we shall deal with this parenthesis.

Among the Old Testament scenes in which Satan appears (either literally or figuratively), are two most interesting ones. The former is recorded in Job i. 2, and ii. 1, etc., and the latter in Zech. iii. 1, 2. His object there, as our great enemy, is brought out by his titles here given, "that old serpent," suggesting the crafty deceptions which he employs, "which deceiveth the whole world," *i.e.* the whole of the inhabited world, even the saints being tempted, as was their Lord. The word translated "devil" means "one who throws over or across, and so who traduces and slanders." "Satan" is the Hebrew for "adversary," and is closely allied with the accusing of the brethren. Now that Christ "has entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us," Satan as a successful accuser is silenced, and cast out of heaven. This is an all-important point in the progress of Satan's history. "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? . . . Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven," says our Blessed Lord. Connect we this thought ever with the holy eucharistic plea, and as we avail ourselves of it, let us say, with loving and grateful hearts—

"The blood of Jesus
For our pardon cries.

"Oft as it is sprinkled
On our guilty hearts,
Satan in confusion
Terror-struck departs."

And now we see that there "was war in heaven." There need be no difficulty in the idea of heaven as a circumscribed locality ; it rather helps the scene, and is figurative in the highest sense. When we say, "Our Father, which art in heaven," we do not mean that the Father to whom we pray dwells in some far-off place, but in a region purer, loftier, and brighter than ours ; and that the true essence of His Being belongs to a spiritual world. In this region *became* war. Angels fought (suitably) against angels, the holy angels being under his command who is called, in the Book of Daniel, "Michael your prince." See also Dan. xii. 1. The title "Prince of Israel" emphasizes the restoration of the Old Testament Church, and strengthens our interpretation of the "woman" as the Old Testament Church. After his expulsion from heaven, Satan, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit which *now* worketh in the children of disobedience," works on earth with great wrath, "knowing he hath but a short time." But his defeat in heaven is anticipatory of his ultimate and complete defeat when, after the second advent, he is to be bound in hell. In connection with this we should read St. John xii. 31, 32, "Now is the judgment of this world : now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself. But this He said, signifying by what manner of death He should die." It is not only "up from the earth," but "out of the earth," signifying the Cross as associated with, and allied to, the *Resurrection*. It is interesting to notice, in connection with the war in heaven, that the salutation of the multitude in the triumphal entry into Jerusalem is "peace in heaven." The correct translation in v. 8 brings out the thorough character of the defeat ; they not only did not prevail, but did not *even* find their place any more in heaven. It may be well here, following Canon Fausset *in loco*, to notice the gradations in Satan's downfall. (1) Though still having access to heaven prior to our Lord's ascension, as man's accuser, he is deprived of his heavenly excellency. (2) From the ascension to the millennium he is judicially cast out as the accuser of the brethren, and as the millennium approaches he loses his *standing against Israel*, who is outside the pale for a time till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. His rage becomes proportionately greater. (3) During the millennium he is bound. (4)

Finally, having been loosed for a while, he is cast for ever into the lake of fire. The casting of him out of heaven is followed by a "great" voice, probably the united anthem of the heavenly host, celebrating the triumph, "*Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ,*" etc. "*Now,*" *i.e.* that Satan is evicted: so, most strikingly, our Blessed Lord at the time of His ascension says, "*All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.*" We should remember, for our hope and comfort, that there will be another "*now*" when Israel is restored, and yet again another when all enemies are put under His feet. Ally with the definite article before "*salvation, strength,*" etc., the Doxology, "*Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory.*" Notice next that "*accused*" is in the Revised Version "*accuseth,*" and with the expression "*day and night*" denotes terrible persistence and continuity; how all-important it is that we should be constantly joining in the High-Priestly plea of our Advocate; how all-important that we should cry "*day and night*" to God through Him! "*If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous: and He is (exists as) The Propitiation for our sins.*" Thus it follows most appropriately, "*they overcame because of the blood of the Lamb.*" This expression is not necessarily synonymous with the death of Christ. Let us gather together certain passages in which it occurs elsewhere. "*The Church which He has purchased with His own blood;*" "*In whom we have redemption through His blood;*" "*Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ;*" "*Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by (through) His own blood He entered in once (for all) into the holy place;*" "*To Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel;*" "*The bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp, wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His blood, suffered without the gate.*" In 1 St. Pet. i. 2 the "*sprinkling of the blood of Jesus*" is clearly allied with Exod. xxiv. (as is Heb. ix.). To these passages, which might be greatly multiplied, I will only add 1 St. John i. 7, "*If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have*

fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." In all these cases it is not simply the *death* of the all-perfect *Victim* which is meant, but the *pleaded* blood. It is rather the *life* preserved *now* and active beyond death. As in the Holy Communion we do not *only* join ourselves with the death of Christ, but also with the *living present* plea of that death, so here it is the blood which pleads for us within the veil, or rather is pleaded by our great High Priest. The "finished work" upon the cross was "finished" only as it appertained to the perfect Victim; its presentation in memorial (to which our Eucharist corresponds, line by line, and angle by angle, as far as anything on earth can) is not finished, and will not be so long as any poor needy soul requires it, up to the day of judgment. Thank God the work of Jesus for us, as High Priest, is *not* finished, and the saving power of His death rests on this fact that it is being presented and pleaded by Christ before the Father. He, the great High Priest, ever presents Himself as the great and perfect Victim; it is not the mere fact of His most precious death which helps us, but the all-prevailing plea of that death which is ever ascending; so He gives to all believers this special injunction, "This do into My memorial."

"By" is "because of," or "on account of;" "because of the blood of the Lamb," and "because of the word of their testimony," *i.e.* because they have borne faithful witness, and "they loved not their lives, even as far as death." "Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that tabernacle in them," *i.e.* the whole body of the redeemed, including us, if only we remain faithful unto death, because the victory is regarded as complete. Though it has not yet taken place, it is looked at as our Lord looked at "the prince of this world," cast out. God is ever looking at us, "not as we are, but as we are becoming" (St. Augustine). I feel sure that the thought is the same as that in ch. vii., the keeping of the tabernacle feast, after our weary toil here. It is ours by anticipation. "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly;" "Our citizenship is in heaven;" "Woe for the earth and the sea," *i.e.* all that is not "heavenly." Notice in the Revised Version at the close of this chapter that the dragon stands "upon the sand of the sea." It is in the earth and the sea that he hopes to find

his victims. "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy;" "The wicked are like the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt;" "He that is of the earth is earthy, and speaketh of the earth." Sin is the cause of all trouble, and Satan the source of all sin. He has been baffled in heaven, now he tries the earth and the sea, and that with the most awful, wrathful energy, because he knows that even with them his time is short. "Come down" is rather "gone down," implying active effort on his part.

That which, I think, should strike us more than anything else, is what a frightfully *real* picture of our great enemy this is! What a great and mighty being Satan has been! How powerful he still is! How bitterly he hates us! With what solemn fear should we remember this! And how earnestly should we each day commit ourselves to the protection and grace of the "stronger than he!" "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." How earnestly should we lay to heart the words of our Lord which follow, "He that is not with Me is against Me!" especially in view of the fact that at the end of "the short time" the Lord comes! "Lo! come quickly." So God speaks to us, "Who is on My side, who?" Meanwhile, do not let us be surprised if temptations and persecutions, and the violence of the powers of darkness increase. It is but for a time.

"Behold!" says Christ, "behold! I have told you before." Be we then on our guard against surprise; expect these things. Expect them also associated with such signs and wonders as are calculated to deceive even the elect. Hour by hour fix we our eyes on our all-powerful Father in heaven; hour by hour trust the strong arm of our Lord; hour by hour follow Him as our Captain; hour by hour ask for the Holy Spirit, receiving out of Christ's fulness grace "in exchange for" grace. Weak, but earnest; weak, yet strong; wounded, yet fighting still; wounded sorely, yet still free; overcoming "because of the blood of the Lamb;" hating evil, loving and seeking good; and the result will be as when Zephon rebuked Satan—

"Abashed the devil stood,
And felt how awful goodness is!"

Paradise Lost, iv. 837, 838.

INSTRUCTION XXIX.

CHAPTER xii. 13 TO END.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great Eagle, that she might flee into the wilderness into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood, after the woman : that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the Commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

13 And I stood upon the sand of the sea :

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the

14 man *child*. And there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness unto her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by

16 the stream. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his

17 mouth. And the dragon waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus : and he stood upon the sand of the sea.

It will help us very much, alike in the consideration of the Church's trials, as in our own manifold temptations, to remember that the *earth* is now the definite scene of the devil's conflict. In heaven he has been defeated, and from heaven he has been cast out. But on earth we and he have to do battle ! How unequal seems the conflict ! Yet it is all in our favour, and the victory is ours in Christ

as a certainty. "Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." The scene is now definitely before us. If Bishop Wordsworth be correct, we merely revert to that which has been already described in verse 6. But we must, nevertheless, remember that while there the devil stood *ready* to persecute the woman, here the warfare, persecution, and attack upon the woman are seen as *actually begun*. Indeed, we see them in progress at this moment in our own lives and experience, and in that of the whole Church. "Therefore take unto you the whole armour of God." This attack is the effect of the wrath of the dragon, furious not only at his expulsion from heaven, but at his coming defeat on earth, which, in its turn, is preparatory to his being cast down lower still.

The whole passage is a difficult one, but we may clear the ground by degrees. Firstly, there seems a fairly general consensus of opinion that the *imagery* is connected with *Israel's* experience. This we should indeed expect if our explanation of "the woman" as the Old Testament Church is correct. It is in type, the history of the *whole* Church. "The two wings of the great eagle" are a clear and distinct reference to God's own declaration through Moses to His people (see Exod. xix. 3, 4): "Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself." We may also compare Deut. xxxii. 11, 12. On these two wings she goes unto her place (see verse 6) in the wilderness. There she is nourished, as the children of Israel were, physically and spiritually, physically by the quails, and the manna, and the water from the rock, and spiritually at the same time, with that spiritual food of which these were the "outward and visible sign." "All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. x. 1-4). She is nourished, moreover, in the wilderness for a specific time. This period has been expressed, as we have seen, in different

ways—twelve hundred and sixty days, three and a half years ; time, times, and half a time ; and forty-two months. There are, it is noted, forty-two journeyings of the children of Israel in their forty years' sojourn, from Rameses to Abel-Shittim (see Num. xxxiii.). The water cast out as a river, and the earth opening her mouth to swallow it up, seem to refer to the passage through the Red Sea, which looked like their destruction, and filled them with fear, and of which, in their triumphant song, it is said, "Thou stretchedst out Thy right hand, and the earth swallowed them." We are helped to this conclusion by David's words, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid," etc. But the scriptural imagery of a flood to describe great danger is so familiar to us as scarcely to need further reference ; but comp. Dan. ix. 26, "The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary ; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." Or again, Isa. lix. 19, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him."

And now we come to the main point of difficulty. What is meant by the expression, "the rest of her seed"? One thing is plain, they belong to the *Christian* Church, for they are described as "keeping the commandments of God, and holding the testimony of Jesus." They may be converts to Christianity from the ranks of the literal Israel ; if so, two passages in the Epistle to the Romans may be referred to (ix. 27 and xi. 5). But is there any insuperable difficulty in understanding them to be the New Testament Church itself? They would then be "the woman's seed," as "members of Christ ;" and "the rest of her seed" (those who were left behind after the man-child was caught up to God and His throne), the Church militant here in earth. They would especially be a remnant, if we look upon them as Gentiles, those whom our Lord prayed for in His High-Priestly prayer ; "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word." The Church is not left orphan, but it is left to be the witness of Christ in the world, and as "heaven is gathering one by one," there is always a remnant "militant here in earthly gloom."¹ If

¹ Bishop Bickersteth's "Water from the Well Spring," p. 188.

we thus interpret, the parallel between the New and the Old Testament Church is most interesting. The first flight of the early Church, which we read of in Acts viii. 1, etc., and her extraordinary preservation, accounted for (as the rise and progress of the Christian faith in the earliest stages of its history can also be) only by the direct interposition of God, point alike to the correctness of our conjecture. Notice another parallel with Our Lord's discourse on the last things, St. Matt. xxiv. 16.

It is to this New Testament Church that the help of the great eagle's wings is given, under God. Imperial Rome is, I think, meant. It is by Rome that St. Paul is saved from the fury of the Jews. "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?" "The chief captain was afraid after that he knew that he was a Roman." Later on, before her fall into error, it was Rome which, after the conversion of Constantine, nourished the Church. It was against the Church that the flood-tide of persecution was let loose, persecution which owed its cessation, under God, to the intervention of "the earth," *i.e.* of the temporal powers. Some commentators go so far as to interpret the two wings of the eagle as the two divisions of the Roman empire, both of which afforded their protection to the Church. The "time, times, and a half" will be the period (definitely fixed, as we have seen, in the counsels of Almighty God) between the flight of the early Church and the coming of Christ.

One main point to remember is, that they who keep the commandments of God and "hold" the testimony of Jesus, are the very ones against whom the devil will wage the most bitter war. The faithful Church must, and will, be the chief object of the dragon's persecution as he "stands upon the sand of the sea" watching for his prey. She, and each one of her members, must certainly face this. It is not the vessel going home with just enough ballast to keep her steady which is an object of the pirate's attack; her great hull, standing clear above the water, indicates her emptiness. It is rather the vessel heavily freighted with precious cargo, with the load-line only just visible, that he longs to seize. So it is the Christian fresh from the holy table, fresh from his closet prayer, or public worship, from the study of God's Word, or from

quiet meditation, the Christian filled with his precious freight, against whom the corsair "dragon" will ever make war. "All that *will* live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution."

Our one comfort is, that "The Lord sitteth above the water-flood; the Lord remaineth a King for ever. The Lord shall give strength unto His people; the Lord shall give His people the blessing of peace."

INSTRUCTION XXX.

CHAPTER xiii. 1-10.

1 And I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads, and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the

|| Or, names.

||name of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw, was like unto a Leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a Bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a Lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

† Gr. slain.

3 And I saw one of his heads as it were †wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast, and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?

5 And there was given unto him a mouth, speaking great things and blasphemies, and power was given unto him ||to continue forty and two months.

|| Or, to make war.

6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his Name, and his Tabernacle, and them that dwelt in heaven.

7 And it was given unto him to make war with the Saints, and to overcome them: And power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names

2 of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne,

3 and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as though it had been ¹smitten unto death; and his death-stroke was healed: and the whole earth wondered after the beast;

4 and they worshipped the dragon, because he gave his authority unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? and who is able to war with him?

5 and there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and there was given to him authority

2to continue forty and 6 two months. And he opened his mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, *even* them that ³dwell in the

7 heaven. ⁴And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and there was given to him authority over every

¹ Gr. slain.

² Or, to do his works during. See Dan. xi. 28.

³ Gr. tabernacle.

⁴ Some ancient authorities omit And it was given . . . overcome them.

8 And all that dwell upon the earth, shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

9 If any man have an ear, let him hear:

10 He that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity: *He that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the Saints.

* Matt.
26. 52.

tribe and people and
8 tongue and nation. And

all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, *every one* whose name hath not been ¹written in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation

9 of the world. If any man hath an ear, let him hear.

10 ²If any man ³is for captivity, into captivity he goeth: if any man shall kill with the sword, with the sword must he be killed. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

¹ Or, *written from the foundation of the world in the book . . . slain.*

² The Greek text in this verse is somewhat uncertain.

³ Or, *leadeth into captivity.*

You will remember that, in the plan which we have laid down for the consideration of this book, we are not denying the possibility alike of the historic and futurist explanations; all that we maintain is that these, however true they may be, do not *exhaust* the meaning of the prophecy. We believe that St. John, taught by the Holy Ghost, did something more than compile a book of dates, mapping out the destinies of kingdoms, and the delineations of the Papacy. "This book is written for all those who, in every age, are St. John's companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. It is for the utterance of *eternal* truths, the announcement of undying principles, and for the consolation of the Church in every age" (Barrett). This caution is particularly necessary as we draw nearer to the further consideration of the figures under which are represented the *great enemies of God and His Church*. We must be very careful not to limit these either to one world-power, or to one particular erring or apostate Church. In the passage before us we are introduced to the second of these enemies; it is one of the agents of the first, *i.e.* of the "dragon," who was foiled in his attempt to destroy Christ. We saw him "standing on the sand of the sea," "the waves and billows of this troublesome world:" its great turmoil representing yet again what Christ predicted, "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." Out of this surging ocean there comes, not a beast as before, in the sense of a living creature, but a *wild* beast. Unto this wild beast the dragon gives his authority. It seems impossible to pass

over the parallel in Dan. vii., the points of which are well summed up by Archdeacon Lee: "Here the beast comes up from the sea, as do the four beasts in Dan. vii. 3. Here the beast has ten horns, like the fourth beast in Dan. vii. 7. The beast here is composed of the leopard, the bear, and the lion (and we must not pass over the cruelty, the relentlessness, and the mighty power, which are indicated by the symbols), *i.e.* of the first three beasts in Dan. vii. 4-6, the fourth beast being indicated both now and in Daniel by the 'ten horns.' In Daniel 'the vision represents the development of the world-power generally in *four* successive phases ;' but here we have a comprehensive representation, under *one* form, of the universal world-power which in Daniel is symbolized by *four* beasts."

Here, therefore, it would seem that we are to see the culmination of the *God-opposing world-power*, not of one particular nation, but in its comprehensive development.

It will be well to place this in a paragraph by itself, "The first beast is *the God-opposing world-power.*"

This beast has "seven heads and ten horns," as the dragon himself has (ch. xii. 3); but here the horns are (R.V.) put first. They would naturally rise first out of the "waters," the signification of which we have already noted. The ten "diadems" are, in this case, not on the heads, but upon the horns. This is, probably, because the world-power is represented without any reference to the religious side. On his heads, on the other hand, are "names of blasphemy"—anti-God and antichrist. Perhaps some such arrogant claim is referred to as that indicated in 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, "Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." Again, though neither pagan nor imperial Rome exhausts the prophecy of either beast, they may, in each instance, serve as an emblem; in which case we note, with interest, the Divine honours ascribed to the Roman emperors. Such a title may be read at this day on the arch of Titus and other monuments. With the combination of the leopard, the bear, and the lion, it is worth noticing not only that the fourth beast in Dan. vii.

has ten horns, but that the lion has one head, the bear one, the leopard *four*, and the fourth beast one, making up the combination of the *seven* heads. If we are right, then, in our conclusion, that we have here the God-opposing world-power of *all times and places*, we revert, with deep interest, to the offer made by the devil to Jesus, and refused by Him: "All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it." We must not look upon this as an idle boast, for the world-power is the dragon's slave, receiving from him whom the Lord Himself calls "the prince of this world"—

- (1) The power.
- (2) The throne from which it is exercised. And—
- (3) The right, as his instrument, to use it.

St. John next sees one of the heads of the beast, as though it had been smitten unto death. It would be much more powerfully translated "slaughtered." There can, I think, be little doubt that this is part of the blasphemy, for it is an awful and impious parody of "the Lamb as it had been slaughtered" (ch. v. 6). This "deadly wound" is so important, that it is mentioned again twice below, in vs. 12, 14. The world was really and ideally overcome by the work of Christ: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." He has done this by His personal example, by His truth, by His perfect life, by His precious death, by His present work. *He* stands before us as the real King, though the people cry, "We have no king but Cæsar." And though He appears to be a lonely, friendless Man, on the very eve of discomfiture and defeat, Satan only "bruises His heel," while He "bruises Satan's head." But "the death-stroke is healed," and the whole earth wonders. Though the victory of the Cross really went on, as it goes now, by the very process which looked like its destruction, though the Church went forth really to similar conquest under similar apparent defeat ("they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word"), yet the world did *seem* to triumph; the power of paganism increased, or seemed to do so. If it be objected to this interpretation that only one head is mentioned, the answer would be that pagan Rome, at the time of our Lord's death, was *the representative*

world-power—the proud, colossal empire whose dominions stretched out north and south, and east and west. While, however, we may have in this and many other interpretations deeply interesting *subordinate* fulfilments of the Apocalypse, I think that the main point to be remembered is that the Church is to expect to find one of her greatest enemies in the secular world-power. “The *whole* earth wonders;” the godless as well as the godly. Faith is put to the test; and now appears “the patience and faith of the saints.” The “wonder of the whole earth” is followed by the *worship* of the dragon (because he gave his authority to the beast), and then of the beast itself.

Just as St. Paul speaks of covetousness as idolatry, so *anything* which men enthrone in their hearts, to the exclusion of Christ, falls under the same head. The things of the world do so particularly, and we are especially warned against them: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” “All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” “That which fell among thorns, are they, which when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.”

The worship of the dragon and of the beast seems to be a continuation of the blasphemous parody on ch. v., where the Lamb is worshipped. In the worship of the beast they cry, “Who is like unto the beast?” Thus not only is language, which properly belongs to God (see Exod. xv. 11), blasphemously applied to the beast, but there seems to be a taunt also at Michael, the great adversary of the dragon and his angels, for “Michael” means “Who is like God?” The taunt is intensified when they add, “Who is able to make war with Him?” Here, again, though there may be many subordinate explanations, our great point is, I think, to remember—

(1) That there are many other forms of idolatry than that of literal image worship; and—

(2) That, in some shape or other, we must expect still the mocking taunt, “Where is now thy God?”

For a definite and distinct period, synchronous with that of the wilderness experience of the Church, there is *given* to the beast—

(1) “A mouth speaking great things and blasphemies ;” and—

(2) Authority to do his works during the fixed period of forty and two months.

Notice for our comfort that it is only by God’s permission that he holds this power at all. The whole description corresponds again with Daniel (see, for example, Dan. vii. 8, 20, 25). I think that which follows in vs. 6, 7 is only a more particular statement or expansion of verse 5. God’s people are to share everything with Him, the sorrow as well as the joy, the suffering as well as the glory. So here the blasphemy levelled at Him and His name falls upon them as well. They are described very beautifully as “His tabernacle,” “them that tabernacle in heaven.” The whole Church is intended, not the triumphant part only, but the “Church militant here in earth” as well. As we have already seen, “our citizenship is in heaven.” It is, moreover, “given unto him to make war with the saints”—the Militant Church, the remnant of the woman’s seed—“and to overcome them.” I hardly think that the “overcoming” is meant to signify our spiritual defeats at the hands of the world, or the wounds which we have all received at the hands of sin in connection with the world, but rather the temporal sufferings of the Church at the hands of the world-power. It is clearly the carrying out of that which has been indicated in ch. xi. 7, 9. In any case, it is only for a time.

I will close with a word of encouragement to those who have to *endure* for Christ.

There is a faith which shows itself in splendid deeds of *active* heroism ; there is another which shows itself in silent waiting and *passive endurance* for Christ’s sake, bearing anything and everything—the cruel taunt, the coldness, the want of recognition, the misunderstanding, the misrepresentation, the *unfair* criticism passed upon motives and actions—these and many more forms which torture takes nowadays—literal torture to the sensitive—rather than give up Christ, and His Church, and Christian principle ! The one *does* much, the other *suffers* much ; the one is, comparatively speaking, easy ; the other is hard,

because only one's own heart, and perhaps one other, knows the trial. It is *bearing* rather than *doing*, *passive* endurance rather than *active* combat.¹

So the way to meet the opposition and persecution of the world is very often not by retaliation, but by patience. There are times in which we do our duty to God more, and show His glory more, by sitting down and enduring.

We must not pass over the wonderful parallel in Dan. vii. 3-22. Notice particularly vs. 21 and 22: "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." "Our Father, which art in heaven. . . . Thy kingdom come."

¹ See my "Victories of Faith," p. 29 *et seq.*

INSTRUCTION XXXI.

CHAPTER xiii. 11-15.

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an Image to the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

† *Gr.*
breath.

15 And he had power to give †life unto the Image of the beast, that the Image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the Image of the beast, should be killed.

11 And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like unto a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

12 And he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his sight. And he maketh the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose death-stroke was

13 healed. And he doeth great signs, that he should even make fire to come down out of heaven upon the earth

14 in the sight of men. And he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by reason of the signs which it was given him to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, who hath the stroke of the sword, and

15 lived. And it was given unto him to give breath to it, even to the image of the beast, ¹that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

¹ Some ancient authorities read *that even the image of the beast should speak; and he shall cause, &c.*

WE proceed to fill in at once, as briefly as is compatible with truth, the details which we did not dwell upon in our last Instruction. "All that dwell on the earth" are, as before, worldly people, they who are of the earth earthy, as contrasted with those who "tabernacle" in heaven.

Here seems another proof that the Apocalypse is not confined to pagan or papal Rome.

The blasphemous contrast is then taken up and interpreted in favour and for the comfort of "those whose names are written in the books of the slaughtered Lamb."

The counsels of God are looked upon as complete from the beginning. Compare our Lord's own words, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (see also Heb. ix. 26). All atonements which were ever made were effected by His blood (see 1 St. Pet. i. 19). This is followed by a solemn call for attention, "If any man hath an ear, let him hear." It applies, no doubt, to that which has been already said, but even more particularly to that which follows, the law of retribution in kind to be dealt out on the one side, and the duty of the saints on the other. In both cases there is a comfort and a warning. Notice yet another reference to the discourse on the "last things." "Here is the patience and the faith of the saints," corresponding with "In your patience possess ye your souls." Reference seems also clear to St. Peter's action in the garden, when our Lord said, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." The Church is to meet her persecution at the hands of the God-opposing world-power, not with retaliation, but with patience and faith. "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Compare very helpfully on the whole passage, 2 Thess. i. 3-12.

We now come to consider the revelation of the third enemy of the Church, the second beast. We must not forget that in ch. xii. 12 (Revised Version), "Woe for the earth and for the sea" was declared; the former *beast*, the God-opposing world-power, rose out of the *sea*; now the next agent of the dragon and enemy of the Church appears out of the *earth*. St. James's words will at once occur to many, "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish." The all-important question is, "What is represented by this second beast?" If we have been so far correct, it must be some form of hostile power connected with the world; and it is, in my judgment, *the Church-opposing power of religious error*;

danger is now to be looked for from *within*, as well as from *without*. The Jewish Church in the time of our Lord, and the Church of Rome during part of her history, are both terrible *illustrations*, but, as before, neither the one nor the other *fills up* the picture nor exhausts the prophecy. We see sometimes indications of what the Church might expect at the hands of mere political nonconformity if it once obtained power over her, while the expulsion of Bible-teaching from some of our Board Schools, in the name of right and of religious liberty, is a sad specimen of the nature and character of the general evil here set forth.

The whole revelation corresponds most strikingly with the experience of our Lord Himself. What He endured His Church has also to face ; "it is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master."

(1) Our Lord meets the *dragon*. He is led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

(2) He suffers under the God-opposing world-power as represented in His time by Pilate and the Romans.

(3) He has to face the religious fanaticism and persecution of the Jews, representing the Church-opposing power of religious error.

We have seen that one of the main features of this book is that the Church is to suffer *as Her Lord did*, and we must expect it in every shape and form, not necessarily in the rough, the coarse, and the brutal, but far more likely (considering the refinements of to-day), in the half truths of humanitarianism and other substitutes for Christ, His Church, and His whole truth. That this is the meaning of the second beast will be made clearer by the description of it, in which will also be brought out the analogy between Christ's experience and that of His Church. We saw, in the case of the first beast, blasphemous travesties of Christ and of God ; here similarly the second beast's "two horns like a lamb" form another blasphemous counterpart to the "Lamb of God," and point to Him as a powerful antichrist, and as being just what so much false teaching is, harmless, innocent, and even beautiful in *appearance*, and appallingly dangerous in reality. *Speech* is the next indication of the correctness of our explanation ; it is with the *voice* rather than with the sword that the mischief is done. It was at the hands of two false witnesses that our Lord suffered. Verse 12

points primarily to Christ-persecuting religious power as represented by the Jews. They practically exercised all the power of the first beast: the crucifixion was their doing. "Pilate saith unto them, What then shall I do unto Jesus which is called Christ? They *all* say, Let Him be crucified. And he said, Why, what evil hath He done? But they cried out exceedingly, saying, Let Him be crucified." It is by them, too, that the first beast, the God-opposing world-power, is exalted anew. Hark to their cry! They were in bondage, they hated their Roman conquerors, and yet they exalt the world-power, and cry, "We have no king but Cæsar." The "great wonders" (verse 13) are plainly yet again another reference to the discourse on the last things. "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect." (Comp. verse 14.) 2 Thess. ii. 9 will also readily occur to many, "Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders;" nor can I forbear adding this passage from Archdeacon Lee: "We cannot doubt that there is also a reference to the wonderful power over nature which the spirit of man has attained to, and which is too often extended to the deification of nature and her laws, and to the disparagement of the Divine action which is ever present in creation."

The first of these "signs" is to make fire come down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men. It seems clear that there is here another blasphemous imitation of God, and, in this case, of Elijah, so remarkably connected with the two witnesses in ch. xi.

Verse 14 presents some difficulty. Attention is drawn by one and another, according to their general interpretation of the book:—

(1) To Pliny's letter to Trajan, in which he states that Christians were punished who would not worship, with incense, the emperor's image.

(2) To Julian the apostate, who set up his image with idols in the forum.

(3) To the erection of statues to the Roman emperors, to whom divine honours were paid.

(4) To the speaking images and winking pictures of the Virgin Mary in the corrupt Roman Church.

These may be, as before, each and all illustrations of

the meaning of the revelation, and, perhaps, in the third case we have the foundation of the symbolism; but I cannot think that they, any more than previous illustrations, fill up the picture or exhaust the prophecy.

Let us, *e.g.*, notice—

- (1) Man is made in the *image* of God.
- (2) "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the *image* of His Son."
- (3) That "as we have borne the *image* of the earthy, we shall also bear the *image* of the heavenly."
- (4) That the new man is renewed in knowledge after the *image* of Him that created him.

There would seem, then, to be another blasphemous parody upon the blessed relationship between God and Christ the incarnate God, Very God, and Very Man, and His people, in that between the dragon and the first and second beast. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye *will* to do." They draw their being from him, and so reproduce him in their character. They deliberately choose as their own the feelings, passions, and ends which belong to him. They are, so to speak, his voluntary organs; what he desires they carry out. The world and the world-power do the dragon's work, as Christ does the Father's, and then, in the great conflict between Christ's Church and antichrist, they are deified and exalted as the Church exalts Christ. It is plain that the image is a living, working, speaking thing. "He" has the power to put those who will not worship it to death. Here, very probably, are signified primarily the religious possessors of the world-power both at Rome and elsewhere, who did persecute unto death. Some of the popes in their great temporal power would again be a partial illustration. I say "partial," for the same *spirit* worked long before, as in the persecution, by Nebuchadnezzar, of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego. It is the world-power in all ages, exalted and defied by erring religious power, and exercised against the Church. To-day it has assumed quite a new shape: æsthetic secularism fills up the picture wonderfully. Arch-deacon Lee speaks of "the worship which the spirit of the age at all times receives, owing to the unconscious influence exercised by it over the minds of men. Note, indeed, that art-worship (of which we hear so much at the present time) seems to be leading men to the idolatry of a new heathenism.

The extremely difficult passage which follows must be left to our next Instruction. We have seen enough to put us on our guard against a danger which is all the greater because it is subtle. The tendency of the day, in the direction against which we are specially warned here, is towards an exaltation of the *unaided* powers of man ; we are face to face, in many quarters, with a purely natural religion, based on the laws of natural things, on the study of man's affections and intellect, on science and beauty, on form and colour, on things which can be seen and touched. It is, very often, most attractive ; it despises the low, the unæsthetic, and the unclean ; it rises sometimes to the level of great and noble thoughts ; but relatively to the spiritual it is all on a lower plane, and in an inferior sphere. It "comes up *out of the earth* ;" it is "not from above," it has not the spiritual principle. It is "not of God." It is anti-CHRIST. Watch against it.

Grant to any one the highest possible attainment in this way, such attainment is all on a lower plane ; refined and attractive it may be, but still only "psychical." "He that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he !"

INSTRUCTION XXXII.

CHAPTER xiii. 16 TO END.

† *Gr. to
give.* †

16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, † to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding, count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man, and his number is, six hundred threescore and six.

16 And he causeth all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, that there be given them a mark on their right hand, or upon their

17 forehead; and that no man should be able to buy or to sell, save he that hath the mark, *even* the name of the beast or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man: and his number is ¹Six hundred and sixty and six.

¹ Some ancient authorities read *Six hundred and sixteen.*

IN this passage we see first of all, I think, another blasphemous imitation. To understand it at all properly, we must remember that names were originally expressive of character, or some characteristic feature or speciality. Thus, Adam means "the man;" Eve, "living;" Cain, "acquired;" Abel, "grief;" and so on. When we received our Christian name, a mark was placed upon our foreheads, invisible to man but visible to God, by which was sealed not only God's pledge to us, but the consecration and dedication of ourselves to His service. Some such mark as this had been God's plan from the days of His earliest Church, the mark being the indication of dedication (see *Exod. xiii. 9, 14*; *Deut. vi. 8*; *xi. 18*; *Ezek. ix. 4*, etc.). The mark on the right hand denotes a pledge to the active work and service of the one who imposes it, and that on the forehead a pledge of the mind and intellect. Slaves and soldiers were branded in token of subjection to master or general; slaves on the forehead, and soldiers on

the hand. It is important to notice that the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads (chs. vii. 3 ; xiv. 1 ; xxii. 4), and also that the construction of the passage lends itself to the idea of voluntary acquiescence. We are apparently left to conclude that, as the *Father's Name* is that which is written on the foreheads of the hundred and forty-four thousand, so the mark here is the name of the beast, or the number which represents it. In the next verse we see the spirit of the second beast at work. We must remember that we are working out this difficult chapter on the same lines as the rest of the book, regarding no historic or futurist view as exhaustive. This spirit is to be seen at work in *all ages* of the Church. Here it is to be noted as forbidding social intercourse. Who cannot fill up this picture? Does it not pourtray the very acme of party spirit? Do we not see abroad every day the utterance in word and act of this evil spirit of separation? "Pronounce our Shibboleth, or we will have nothing to do with you!" Rome is, no doubt, yet again an illustration. Many a time has she put men under the ban of exclusion and isolation; but she does not, as before, *fill up* the revelation. The *same spirit*, to go from one extreme to another, was exhibited in Cromwell's time, especially by Presbyterians and Independents; by the Established Church in the reign of Charles II., and it was seen in America among the Pilgrim Fathers. Here it is set forth, in its worst form, under antichrist. Every Christian should be intensely careful how he admits this spirit into his heart. There is great danger of it, and the sorest evil in it. While we must be uncompromising in upholding truth, because it *is* truth, and because it is not ours to trifle with, to trim, or to lower, we must equally, within the wide limits of truth, extend the hand of sympathy and fellowship to all; while with those who are outside the truth we must deal very gently and tenderly, remembering the numberless causes which may have contributed to their errors. It is, without doubt, a very difficult thing to live without sacrificing one iota of the Catholic faith; to have nothing to do *with* error, and yet to be sympathetic and kind to those who are *in* error. It will never be done by fostering the spirit of exclusion. It *can be done* by the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. This is what I understand by that which follows, "Here is wisdom."

As "faith and patience" were the weapons by which the first beast was to be met, so *wisdom*, "the wisdom which cometh from above," is necessary to meet the second. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

The passage which follows is, perhaps, the most difficult in the Bible. It would be foreign to the plan of these instructions to attempt even an epitome of the various explanations which have been given of the "number of the beast," which is 666. We shall naturally find that those explanations follow the bias of the commentators' minds in one direction or the other. Two or three words, however, are necessary as an introduction, and may help to clear up some of the difficulty.

(1) It is expressly stated that the number is "the number of a man." This, I imagine, means that it is calculable after a *human* manner.

(2) It seems to have been the fashion of the time to assign to the various letters of a man's name the numerical equivalent of each, so that the sum of these would enigmatically represent the name. In the Apocryphal New Testament there is a passage which is interesting and valuable. As far as doctrine is concerned, it has little weight; but it shows the fashion of the period. It is in the General Epistle of St. Barnabas, ch. viii. 10-14: "Understand therefore, children, these things more fully, that Abraham, who was the first that brought in circumcision, looking forward in the spirit to Jesus, circumcised, having received the mystery of three letters. For the Scripture says that Abraham circumcised three hundred and eighteen men of his house. But what, therefore, was the mystery that was made known unto him? Mark, first the eighteen; and next, the three hundred. For the numeral letters of ten and eight are *I H*, and these denote *Jesus*. And because the Cross was that by which we were to find grace, therefore he adds three hundred, the note of which is *T* (the figure of His Cross). Wherefore, by two letters, he signified *Jesus*, and by the third *His Cross*."

(3) Some urge one of the explanations of Irenæus, whose opinion, as being so near the fountain head, is, of course, of great value. He must, in all probability, have frequently conversed with men who, in their turn, had known

and spoken with St. John. He thinks that the word *lateinos* is intended: *l*, equals 30; *a*, 1; *t*, 300; *e*, 5; *i*, 10; *n*, 50; *o*, 70; and *s*, 200; or 666 in all.

Others use the Hebrew and others again the Roman characters; and "the pagan Roman empire" (in the Greek), Nero-Cæsar,¹ Vespasian, Titus, Mahomet, Luther, Calvin, Napoleon, and many others have been selected as the being represented.

I will content myself with mentioning three facts:—

(1) Our blessed Lord's human name, "Jesus," written in Greek characters, makes 888. *I*, equals 10; *eta*, 8; *s*, 200; *o*, 70; *u*, 400; and *s*, again, 200. Some commentators strive to show that the number "8" is an important one in our Lord's life, that it had a *Divine* meaning to the Jew, and that it exceeds the sacred "7" by just so much as the "6" falls short of it.

(2) *Stauros*, the Greek for "cross," with the *st* written as a stenographic cypher, makes 777. *St*, equals 6; *a*, 1; *u*, 400; *r*, 100; *o*, 70; *s*, 200. In the same way, *apostates* makes 666, 1, 80, 70, 6, 1, 300, 8, 200. These are, to say the least, very striking coincidences. If we take 777 as representing the perfect and Divine number in triune form, and as embodying all that comes to us through the Cross, then the 888, representing Jesus, comes before us as more than filling up, with "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over"—all that is covenanted to us in the Cross. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." "God giveth not the Spirit by measure."

(3) The first and second beast form, together with the dragon, a trinity of evil, which is one in aim and object. It apes Divinity; it deceives its votaries with all kinds of specious arguments, and after every effort comes woefully short. "Apostates" would very fairly represent the embodiment of that rebel spirit which, falling away from the true faith, has joined hands with the enemies of Christ against His Church.

Professor Godet's explanation, based on Volkmar's, is too

¹ It is certainly remarkable that the name Nero-Cæsar, written in Hebrew, gives the required number, thus: נ = 50; ר = 200; י = 6; י = 50; פ = 100; ס = 60; ר = 200; 666. And it is suggested that St. John would perhaps use the sacred language of the Jews to convey secretly to his readers a name which he dare not use openly.

interesting to omit. The cypher $\chi\varsigma$ (666 is thus written in the Greek text) exhibits in its first and third letter the abbreviation of the name of Christ, while the middle letter is the emblem of the serpent, the enemy of Christ. The idea would thus be that of the adversary of Christ coming in to mar his work. Or if we take the last letter as a stenographic cypher standing for the cross, then it is that which comes between Christ and His cross, separating Christianity from the cross in such a way that it becomes apostate. This, if it does not satisfy us as to its correctness, supplies us, at least, with our main lesson. We are all to be on our guard against specious arguments and spurious imitations of truth, brought forward by false Christs and false prophets with such cleverness as to deceive, if it were possible, even the elect. "Many shall come in My Name, saying, I am the Christ; and shall lead many astray. Then shall they deliver you up unto tribulation, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all the nations for My Name's sake. And then shall many stumble, and shall deliver up one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall arise, and shall lead many astray. And because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of the many shall wax cold. But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." Antichrist and "apostates" are both abroad. They are so in a new and subtle shape. Men are being taught that they can reach up to the ideal without Christ, without His Church, without His sacraments, while many, even among religious people, are advocating secular instruction only in our day-schools, in the name of liberty. This system, if what we have seen to-day be correct, will all come short; it will bring us no rest, no peace, no sure and certain hope.

INSTRUCTION XXXIII.

CHAPTER XIV. 1-5.

14 And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's Name written in their foreheads.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps.

3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the Elders, and no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

4 These are they which were not defiled with women: for they are virgins: These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: These †were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God, and to the Lamb.

5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

14 And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their fore-

2 heads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and the voice which I heard *was* as *the voice* of harpers harping with their harps:

3 and they sing as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders: and no man could learn the song save the hundred and forty and four thousand, *even* they that had been purchased out of the earth.

4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These *are* they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, *to be* the firstfruits unto God

5 and unto the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no lie: they are without blemish.

† Gr.
were
bought.

PROCEEDING upon the same plan which we have already adopted, we have, following on the late terrible revelation, others visions of consolation. They are three in number, and commence respectively at vs. 1, 6, and 14 of this chapter. They are, in each case, introduced by the

expression, "And I saw." The first, which we consider to-day, represents "the Lamb standing on the Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having His Name, and the Name of His Father written on their foreheads."

Notice (1) the contrast between the second beast, who had two horns like a lamb (one of the blasphemous imitations of which he was guilty), and Jesus *The Lamb*.

(2) The Mount Zion, which is, probably, intended to represent the heavenly counterpart of the earthly Zion, a place so dear to the Israelite, "The Holy hill upon which God had placed His King," the Holy place where God Himself dwelt, "the Hill of Zion which He loved."

(3) A 144,000, not *the*. Though the definite article is not used, it seems difficult to separate the passage altogether from that in ch. vii. This view is strengthened by the statement that these 144,000 are the *firstfruits* unto God and unto the Lamb, while, later on, we have the general harvest of ransomed souls, the same order being thus observed in both cases. In the one the 144,000 sealed, and then the great multitude; in the other the 144,000 firstfruits, and then the general harvest.

(4) The contrast between the mark of the beast, his name, and his number, and "The Lamb's Name and the Name of His Father." The name, as we have before seen, is one, just as our baptism is into one name, that "of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The promise in ch. iii. 12 at once occurs to us: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the Name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new Name."

A voice is then heard out of heaven, similar in description to the voice of the Son of Man Himself (see ch. i. 15). The accompaniment of the thunder we have noticed before in chs. vi. 1, and x. 3, 4. "And the voice which I heard was as the voice of harpers harping with their harps." The voice heard is "as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder," and yet all is tuned in perfect harmony to the sweet instrument the harp. Heaven is not, as some seem to think, all singing, but it is all *song*, all harmony, all worship; every pulsation of the redeemed,

the cleansed, and sanctified souls, being in perfect concord with the heart of God, whether they work or whether they rest, whether they sing or whether they be silent.

And they sing "*as it were* a new song." It is *old* in one sense, as God's purpose had been from the ages, but *as it were* a new song, because sung under new circumstances, *i.e.* after faithful conflict with the three great enemies of the Church. For the four living creatures and the elders we may refer to the Instructions on chs. iv. and v.

Notice next that the 144,000 are described as "redeemed" or "purchased out of the earth," *i.e.* I think, out of their natural condition as inherited from the first Adam. None but they, the redeemed, can learn this song, just as none can know the new name save he that receiveth it. Angels have not experienced the redemption as these have who are "purchased out of the earth," so the children's hymn beautifully runs—

"There's a song for little children
Above the bright blue sky ;
A song that will not weary,
Though sung eternally ;
A song which even angels
Can never, never sing ;
They know not Christ as Saviour,
But worship Him as King."

We see next, most interestingly, that the 144,000 are described in fivefold terms.

(1) They are "virgins." It seems impossible to take this expression *literally*, though we know of St. Paul's advice to the Corinthians in their then present distress. Even then, however, he adds, "Howbeit each man hath his own gift from God, one after this manner, and another after that." Moreover, marriage is of God's own appointment, "instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union betwixt Christ and His Church." It is an estate which "Christ adorned and beautified by His presence, and first miracle that He wrought, in Cana of Galilee, and is commended of St. Paul to be honourable among all men." It seems impossible that marriage should therefore, *ipso facto*, exclude from a great blessing. The contrast is, I imagine, rather with that spiritual sin, which is so often pictured in Holy Scripture, and especially in this book, by metaphors akin to unfaithfulness to the seventh

commandment in its enlarged sense. The Church, which is the "bride of Christ," is the very opposite of the "harlot;" she is "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing;" she is "all-glorious within," true to her Lord. Compare 2 Cor. xi. 2, "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." While, therefore, the passage should be a great encouragement to us all to seek after literal purity—purity of heart, and word, and thought, singleness of eye to God and His glory, it should be equally so in the direction of holding fast the purity of "the faith once for all delivered unto the saints."

(2) "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." Denoting, I think, not only their present condition, corresponding to the being led by the Lamb to the living fountains of waters, but their *character*; not only are they pure, and single-eyed, and true to the faith, but they follow (continuously) even while on earth, taking up their cross daily, and walking, as their Saviour did, along the narrow way. Remember the way *is* narrow, too narrow to take sin with us, too steep for us ever to lay down our staff, too long to neglect heavenly food and support, too rough to let go the arm on which we must wholly, solely, and absolutely lean, the arm of Jesus. The strict translation is, it may be noted, "These are they who are following."

(3) "These were purchased from among men, a 'first-fruits' unto God and unto the Lamb." Christ Himself is, in one sense, the firstfruits (see 1 Cor. xv. 20–24). The faithful are so in another. "Of His own will begat He us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures" (St. James i. 18). They are consecrated to God and accepted because of the High Priest's work. The Jewish Christians, as the first converts to Christ, would be so in a very special sense. Canon Fausset says, "Israel's hundred and forty-four thousand elect are the firstfruits; the Gentile elect of every nation and kindred and tongue and people, who refuse to worship the beast, are the harvest; in a further sense the whole transfigured and translated Church, which reigns with Christ at His coming, is the firstfruit and the consequent *universal* ingathering of Israel and the nations, ending in the last judgment, is the full harvest."

(4) "In their mouth was found no *lie*." 1 St. John ii. 21, 22 ("I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, who denieth the Father and the Son") is very forcible in this connection, as is also the contrast between them and (a) The false prophet; (b) The dragon, who is a "liar from the beginning." Theirs is emphatically a life of truth.

(5) "They are without blemish," as the bride of Christ, and as Christ The Lamb Himself, perfect Antitype of the lamb without blemish and without spot, in Whom and by Whom they are presented "faultless before the presence of His Glory with exceeding joy."

Our own personal help may be gathered from a reference to some of the most interesting commands about the harvest in Old Testament history (see Lev. xxiii. 9-11): "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it." Now, the "morrow after the sabbath" corresponds with the day on which our blessed Lord rose from the grave. Turn then again to Lev. xxiii., and, this time, to the fifteenth and sixteenth verses, "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number *fifty* days; and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the Lord." Notice then that "fifty days" from our Lord's resurrection bring us to Pentecost, the day of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the introduction of the dispensation under which the Church is now living. It is at the close of the "fifty days" that a "new meat-offering" is to be offered unto the Lord. As the burnt-offering was always associated with a man's duty specially towards *God*, so the meat-offering was directly connected with his duty towards his *neighbour*. Christ stands before us, the perfect fulfilment of the Old Testament picture, in two lights. As on Calvary He was

the perfect *Victim*, so He is now our perfect High Priest, within the veil, whither He has taken the memorial of His sacrifice. Thus under this other type He becomes first the Firstfruits, and then the Priest taking the firstfruits to God to be accepted for us. In this blessed belief we, if only we will bring our dedicated life in association with the firstfruits, to Christ, our High Priest, shall find it by Him waved, comprehended and incorporated with His own, and so accepted. How changed a man's life becomes when he realizes this great truth ! There will be labour still, for we must work ; there will be tribulation still, for we "must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God ;" there will still be need of much watchfulness and prayer, still need for us to do long and terrible battle against our besetting sins. We shall still have to meet temptation ; but every trial, every need, every sorrow, every sense of personal want, or want of the Church, every attack of besetting temptation, will be found to be not only a trial, a temptation, and a need, but also a call to prayer and to communion, in the light of acceptance and sonship. Our life will not necessarily be a life without failure, but a life in which even failure is part of the "web and woof" of success ; a life which, in spite of many a failure, is a life of progress, and of growth ; a life lived out under the Father's smile, and not under the lash of the slave-driver ; a life in which faith is indeed the *substance* of things hoped for—perfect holiness, perfect love, perfect likeness to Christ at the great harvest home ! The firstfruits are *there, accepted*, pledge of the acceptance of all the rest, pledge that we too, if only we will remain "virgins" in the faith, if only we will "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth," if only we will "walk in the truth," shall one day be "presented faultless" in *Him*, even as already we stand "accepted in the beloved," accepted in *Him*.

INSTRUCTION XXXIV.

CHAPTER xiv. 6-11.

6 And I saw another Angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel, to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come: *and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

8 And there followed another Angel, saying, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

9 And the third Angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy Angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. And they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

6 And I saw another angel flying in mid heaven, having an eternal gospel to proclaim unto them that ¹dwell on the earth, and unto every nation and tribe and

7 tongue and people; and he saith with a great voice, Fear God, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters.

8 And another, a second angel, followed, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, which hath made all the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

9 And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a great voice, If any man worshippeth the beast and his image, and receiveth a mark on his forehead,

10 or upon his hand, he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is ²prepared unmixed in the cup of his anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the

11 Lamb: and the smoke of their torment goeth up ³for ever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, they that worship the beast and his image, and whoso receiveth the mark of his name.

¹ Gr. sit.

² Gr. mingled.

³ Gr. unto ages of ages.

* Ps. 146. 5. Acts 14. 15.

* Is. 21. 9. Jer. 51. 8. ch. 18. 2.

HERE is the second vision of consolation. We may subdivide it into three sections, commencing respectively at vs. 6, 8, and 9, with the announcements of the three angels. The first is seen "flying in mid heaven, having *an* eternal gospel to proclaim unto them that dwell on the earth, and unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people." Notice, as we so often have, a parallel with our Lord's discourse on the four last things: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come." We should ally this with "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." It seems to me that many good commentators go out of their way to destroy the beauty of the passage; one of them, for example, to whom we owe much, declares that it means "the condemnation which alone remains for those by whom that gospel is being despised and rejected." How can this be a gospel? a message of good news? We need not commit ourselves to the whole doctrine of universalism if we express the belief that no one will be finally and irrevocably condemned until he has had a chance of embracing the good news that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, that He has made a perfect atonement between the human race and God, that His sacrifice upon the cross is the "one full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world," and that Jesus Christ Himself is now, as our great High Priest, ever pleading the eternal memorial of that great and all-sufficient act on Calvary. He vanquished sin and death, and Satan, and the end, which is to come *after* this preaching, is not to come till He has put down (or abolished) all rule and all authority and power. I feel myself that unless a far larger number than some imagine are ultimately saved, it can hardly be said that Christ has abolished all power of evil, or even that He has succeeded (in the full sense) in His purpose of saving the world. Here, then, I believe, that what is expressly stated is expressly meant; it is an eternal "good news," open to all who *will* to receive it, at least till the end comes, the Gospel of Him who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and it is preached to those who are dwelling or "sitting" in the abode of worldliness and evil, as well as to every nation, and tribe, and tongue,

and people, in order that they may embrace it and turn from their sin. Of one thing I feel assured, that no one ever was, is now, or ever will be eternally lost till the Father has, as it were, put His arms around the neck of that soul, looked it in the face, shown it its sin and His own love, His own being, and the Catholic Faith, and then the soul has deliberately rejected the love, apostatized from the faith, chosen the sin. The sin against the Holy Ghost is not any specific act of trespass, but the permanent hardening of the soul against the Love of God.¹

If we adopt the alternative reading "sit," we have yet another parallel, for it implies just the same fancied and false security as that about which our Lord warns us. "As were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of Man." We shall, in considering the millennial reign, see some reason at least for the hope that before the end comes many will be won to Christ who do not attain to the first resurrection. The conditions must, of course, always remain the same. Fear is to lead to repentance, repentance to submission, and submission to worship.

The second angel announces the fall of Babylon. Two passages about the literal Babylon form an interesting parallel. They are in Isaiah, chaps. xiv. 22, 23, and xxi. 9: "I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of Hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of Hosts." "And behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen (R.V. 'Horsemen in pairs'). And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods He hath broken unto the ground." We have before us a foreshadowing of that which is more fully described in ch. xvi. 19, etc., of this book; and as we shall have to consider the meaning more fully later on, it will here be sufficient to say that I propose to treat Babylon as representing under one title

¹ See my "Victories of Faith," p. 96.

every degenerate and unfaithful Church. The root of the word is the same as "Babel," "confusion." It is not Rome only that is signified, but *every Church* which, *as a body*, has departed from the faith. Remember, however, that as in the true Church there will ever be found some unfaithful ones, so in a degenerate and faithless Church there may be found many that are faithful. "Yet I have left Me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." The *spirit* of Babylon is unfaithfulness to Christ and to His teaching. Note the miserable *confusion* produced by heresy and false doctrine, with its consequent division. Our individual lesson, whenever we read or hear of "Babylon," should be, "Be careful how you prefer the 'treasures of Egypt' to the 'reproach of Christ;' how you place self-indulgence before self-sacrifice, and the smiles and honours of the world before the approval and commendation of your Saviour." Every Church which has done this comes under the head of the city of Babylon, and every one in her who willingly does the same is a burgess of the city. "Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon" (Zech. ii. 7).

We now come to a terrible passage, and I cannot but feel that a great responsibility rests upon me in attempting to deal with it. "Another angel, a third, followed them," declaring, in terms which all combine together to enforce the point, the *unmitigated* wrath of God against those who worship the beast and his image, and pledge themselves, mind and body (indicated by their receiving his mark upon their hands and their foreheads), to his service. The "wine of the wrath of God" is another instance of retribution in kind, and is in antithesis to "the wine of the wrath of her fornication." We refer with interest to Psa. lxxv. 8: "In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and He poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them." This one is "unmixed:" mixture would refer either to that of water to temper its strength, or to the ingredients of bitter herbs and other things, which were steeped in the cup probably to make it soporific. The general tenor of the metaphor seems to connect itself, without the shadow of a doubt, with the *judgments* of Almighty God.

Compare two passages, Isa. li. 17, and Jer. xxv. 15: "Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of His fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out." "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me; Take the wine-cup of this fury at My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it," etc.

Next we have that other terrible accompaniment, "fire and brimstone." "Upon the ungodly He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest: this shall be their portion to drink." Moreover, the torment is aggravated by the fact that they are in the presence not only of the holy angels, but of the Lamb Himself. The smoke of the fire and brimstone, which represents their torment, goes up unto "ages of ages." And, culminating horror! "they have no rest day and night, they that worship the beast and his image, and whoso receiveth the mark of his name." It is an *awful* picture; yet, in common with every one of you who has learned by the teaching of the Holy Spirit anything of the eternal nature and evil of sin, or of the eternal impossibility of sin dwelling with the all-Holy, I rejoice in it, I say "Amen" to it with all my heart, if it is to be the condemnation of my sin. I *do* want it *eternally* (in the fullest sense of the word) banished, and I say, even though it be with faltering voice, "Amen," "Thy will be done," to every process, however awful, by which my heavenly Father may kill it, crush it, curse it! So long as I *willingly hold it*, so long I *must* suffer, so long I must drink unmixed the wine of the wrath of God, so long I must be tormented with fire and brimstone, so long must the smoke of my torment go up, so long must I be without rest, for "the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt: there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked," Amen, Amen, Amen. But if this is a picture of *hopeless* torment, if the punishment is not remedial, if there is *no* chance of a change of mind for these unhappy subjects of the wrath of God, with the Lamb Himself (who is to see of the travail of His soul and to be *satisfied* with it!) looking on, then I close my Bible with a deep sigh, and a long-drawn groan! As it is, I am content to write over this passage two definitions of Almighty God which can never contradict each other,

and in both of which I rejoice, "Our God is a consuming fire;" "God is love."

Two or three points may help us. Notice that "they that worship" is rather "they that are worshipping," implying a *continuous* act. The *receiving* of the mark seems to indicate that it is a *voluntary* act. The condition is hopeless for those who willingly continue in it. Amen, Amen, Amen; we wish it so. We do not want the wicked released till they are repentant, and then they are no longer wicked. The office of the fire and of the worm is to destroy that which is corrupt. If we have any real grasp of God's truth, we shall all hope and pray that their beneficent office and work may continue so long as there is corruption to destroy. Amen, Amen, Amen.

My present feeling in dealing with all eschatological questions is that, while we may often be inclined to ask, with one of old, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" the answer is still to each one of us, "Strive (agonize) to enter in at the strait gate."

For other difficulties I like to think this—that as long as there is a loophole for infinite love, infinite love will find it. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do *right*?"

"There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in His justice,
Which is more than liberty.

"For the love of God is broader
Than the measures of man's mind;
And the Heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind."

FABER (Hymns A. & M., 634.)

"There the work of life is tried
By a juster Judge than here."

(Hymns A. & M., 401.)

If you were compelled to choose, this moment, whether—

(1) You would be utterly saved from sin henceforward, never again grieving by faintest thought of evil the Most Beloved, but not excused the punishment, the penalty already incurred by our past sins; or whether—

(2) You would be utterly saved from every smallest penalty or suffering now or hereafter, but not completely freed from sin either here or hereafter . . . look into your heart, face the truth, say, "*Which* would you choose?"¹

¹ "Links and Clues," p. 151.

It is a solemn and a searching test. May God give us all grace to pray, "Save me, O my Father, but destroy my sin." And, in this sense, "May it please Thee, the All-merciful, in Thine unsparing and merciless condemnation of their sin, to have mercy upon all men! We beseech Thee to hear us, Good Lord. Amen, Amen, Amen."

INSTRUCTION XXXV.

CHAPTER xiv. 12 TO END.

12 Here is the patience of the Saints : Here are they that keep the Commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, ||from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.

14 And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* sat like unto the son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

15 And another Angel came out of the Temple crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud : *Thrust in thy sickle and reap, for the time is come for thee to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ||ripe.

16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

17 And another Angel came out of the Temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18 And another Angel came out from the Altar, which had power over fire, and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.

12 Here is the patience of the saints, they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead which die ¹in the Lord from henceforth : yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours ; for their works follow with them.

14 And I saw, and behold, a white cloud ; and on the cloud *I saw* one sitting like unto ²a son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

15 And another angel came out from the temple, crying with a great voice to him that sat on the cloud, Send forth thy sickle, and reap : for the hour to reap is come ; for the harvest of the

16 earth is ³over-ripe. And he that sat on the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth ; and the earth was reaped.

17 And another angel came out from the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp

18 sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, he that hath power over fire ; and he called with a great voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Send forth thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters

|| Or,
from
hence-
forth
saith the
Spirit,
yea.

* Joel
3. 13.

|| Or,
dried.

¹ Or, *in the Lord.*
From
hence-
forth,
yea,
saith the
Spirit.

² Or, *the Son.*

³ Gr.
dried up.

19 And the Angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

19 of the vine of the earth ; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel cast his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vintage of the earth, and cast it into the winepress, the great winepress, of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and there came out blood from the winepress, even unto the bridles of the horses, as far as a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

¹ Gr. vine.

THE awful revelation dealt with in our last Instruction will be fresh in the minds of all. One of its most terrible features was the unrest of the ungodly. "They have no rest day and night, they that worship the beast and his image, and whoso receiveth the mark of his name." In contrast to this is set before us the "rest" of the blessed dead.

They who by patient continuance in well-doing have sought for glory and honour and immortality ; who have gone doggedly plodding on, in spite of all hindrances and difficulties, filling up the root thought of "patience;"¹ they who have kept the commandments of God and borne witness to the faith of Christ and His Church ; they who have been marked, not perhaps so much by splendid deeds of active heroism, as by the far more difficult task of bearing, waiting, suffering for Christ ; they—in contrast to the others—"rest from their labours." There is also, in all probability, the thought that they are filling up the correspondence with their Lord's life, to which we have frequently alluded as part of the plan of this great book, dying in the midst of toil and tribulation, of reproaches, persecutions, and distresses for Christ's sake. And this is followed by yet another parallel (to be added to our already long list) with the discourse on the "last things." "Their works do follow them" is rather "their works follow with them ;" and the beautiful parallel is St. Matt. xxv. 34-40. The chief difficulty of the passage seems to be in the word "henceforth." It is twice used by St. John in his holy Gospel (see chs. xiii. 19 ; xiv. 7), which gives

¹ See note on p. 21.

us an indication of his use of the expression. Here the various renderings are—

(1) "Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

(2) "From henceforth saith the Spirit, yea."

(3) "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. From henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit."

(4) "Write, From henceforth blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: even so saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labours;" as it is in our beautiful office for the Burial of the Dead.

However we interpret it, the meaning seems to be that with the accomplishment of this scene the final and complete rest of the faithful firstfruits commences; from this particular period they are free for ever from the trials and sorrows which they had previously had to meet. This statement is borne out by the most solemn asseveration, "Yea, saith the Spirit." The Spirit of the living God takes up the Apostle's statement, and makes it His own emphatic utterance for the comfort of all who are weary with the length or the struggles of the way. It is important that it is from their *labour* that they rest, and not from their *works*. The *struggle*, the *toil*, the *distress* of the labour is past for ever; but not the work itself, for work, in its essence, is all happiness. It is the worry, the anxiety, the incompleteness, the disappointment, the mental and physical weariness which makes it trouble. Take these away, and work is heaven. We have, therefore, the elements of perfect joy combined when we are assured "they rest from their *labours*, and their *works* follow with them." It is well worth our while to notice the other beatitudes of this book, especially if we allow the beautiful conception that "blessed" means "filled with God." (It is arrived at thus: *Beatus* (blessed) from *beo* (I bless); *beo* from *bonus* (good), and *good* is "God.") "Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (ch. xix. 9). "Blessed are they that do His commandments" (R.V., "wash their robes"), "that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (ch. xxii. 14). "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein"

(ch. i. 3). "Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (ch. xvi. 15). "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (ch. xxii. 7). "Blessedness is a word the true meaning of which is open to misconception. It is not a mere future existence of imaginary beatitude; not a bare independence of natural necessities; nor is it identical with, though it may include, happiness. The instinct in human nature to which Christ appealed is more fundamental than the desire for happiness. The word employed by Him to convey His meaning had, by ancient usage, been connected with supposed conditions and modes of the Divine existence. Blessedness, in fact, consists in a living relation to God, in a progressive likeness to Him, and, in its final stage, it is nothing less than the possession of God" ("Lux Mundi," p. 477).

We come now to (1) the harvest; (2) the vintage. The former is, most likely, the ingathering of the faithful. It seems impossible to pass over such a reference as that afforded by St. Matt. xiii. 41-43. We have already seen that the vision of consolation was divided into three sections, commencing respectively with the announcements of the three angels; notice, most interestingly, that here again we have three angels (vs. 15, 17, and 18), so the introduction and *position* of "one like unto a son of man" is emphasized. There are three angels before his introduction, and three after. Now, how is he described in ch. i. 13? "In the *midst* of the candlesticks, one like unto a son of man." Here he appears as the central figure of the seven, as *Jesus* in His glorified *humanity*. I am not afraid of wearying you with parallels, because the more we can legitimately discover, the more strengthened shall we be in our right views of this book. Here, therefore, is another. "They shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send forth His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (St. Matt. xxiv. 30, 31). "Men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world; for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these things begin to come to

pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh" (St. Luke xxi. 26-28).

The "crown" is the garland of victory, and not the diadem of a king. If we combine this with the thought of "a son of *man*," reading 1 Cor. xv. 28, "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that *God* may be all in all," and remembering our Lord's own statement in St. John v. 22, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son;" remembering also that He is "equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood," all difficulty about the commission being given to Jesus by an angel is removed. It is hardly to *Christ*, as representing the second Divine Person in the Holy Trinity, but to *Jesus*, as Son of *man*. The angel is thus but the messenger of God, conveying the expression of the Divine Will. See here another parallel with St. Mark xiii. 32. The Son—as Son of *man*—does not Himself know of that day or that hour. The will of God is thus expressed, "Send forth thy sickle, and reap: for the hour to reap is come; for the harvest of the earth is over-ripe" (or dried up). The marginal reading in St. Mark iv. 29 is interesting, though the Greek words are different.

Another angel comes "out from the temple which is in heaven," as had the previous one. All we are told of him is that he, like the Son of *man*, has a sharp sickle. Yet another angel appears, this time from the altar, apparently in response to the long-continued petition of the "souls underneath the altar" (ch. vi. 9, 10). Compare with the statement of his authority over fire, ch. viii. 3-5.

Here follows the command for the "vintage." This signifies most probably, God's judgments upon the apostate and the ungodly. We are guided towards this conclusion by the expression "vine of the earth." It is in contrast to the "true vine," and is one which is of the earth, earthy, and the wickedness of which has reached its acme. The Greek word, translated "over-ripe," is one from which our word "acme" is derived. The grapes thus gathered are "cast into the wine-press, the great wine-press, of the wrath of God." The metaphor is from Isa. lxiii. 1-4. Is it another instance of retribution in kind? Our Lord Himself, in the one case carrying on His awful, yet most

blessed work, and now they who have rejected Him suffering in this manner? If so, notice yet again, "the wine-press was trodden without the city;" "Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered without the gate."

The scene is intended, I think, to represent, not so much a continuous and eternal punishment, as a world-wide retribution on apostates. The city is, almost without doubt, Jerusalem, typifying the Church. These men reject her, and (as another retribution in kind) appropriately suffer outside her. As the vine, the grapes, and the wine-press are all typical, so the juice of the grape is also typical of the blood poured out in great profusion. The depth of the stream, reaching to the horse-bridles, is clearly allied with a subsequent picture (ch. xix. 11-15). The 1600 furlongs is figurative of the universality of the judgment; it is to be world-wide, for it is the world number, four, first squared, and then multiplied by a hundred.

Our lesson should, I think, be one of great encouragement. How far we may refer to the blessed departed the passage applied to the Old Testament saints, "they without us should not be made perfect," I cannot say, but two things seem to me to be clear, (1) that the final consummation of the elect has not yet taken place; and (2) that there is a time fixed in the counsels of God, when it shall take place, and all unrest shall be for ever done away. The watching in the daytime, when we strained our eyes to discern the foe; the watching in the long night vigils; the weight of the armour; the constant battle against an untiring enemy; the warring of the flesh against the spirit; all these are *then* to be things of the past; no more baffling mysteries, no more despondency, no more subtle thought-assaults, no more temptation, no more sin, nor even *possibility* of sin. The chariot wheels are speeding on to "accomplish the number of God's elect, and to hasten His kingdom." May we be faithful unto death, and be found acceptable in His sight.

INSTRUCTION XXXVI.

CHAPTER XV.

15 And I saw another sign in heaven great and marvellous, seven Angels having the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

2 And I saw as it were a Sea of glass, mingled with fire, and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

* Ex.
15. 1.

3 And they sing *the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, *just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints.

* Ps.
145. 17.

4 *Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy Name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest.

* Jer.
10. 7.

5 And after that I looked, and behold, the Temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

6 And the seven Angels came out of the Temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven Angels seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

15 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having seven plagues, *which are the last*, for in them is finished the wrath of God.

2 And I saw as it were a glassy sea mingled with fire; and them that come victorious from the beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name, standing ¹by the glassy sea, having harps

¹ Or,
upon.

3 of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ²ages. Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest.

² Many ancient authorities read nations.

5 And after these things I saw, and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: and there came out from the temple the seven angels that had the seven plagues, arrayed ³with *precious* stone, pure and bright, and girt about their breasts with golden girdles. And one of the

³ Many ancient authorities read in linen.

7 four living creatures gave unto the seven

8 And the Temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power, and no man was able to enter into the Temple, till the seven plagues of the seven Angels were fulfilled.

angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who liveth ¹for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and none was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels should be finished.

¹ Gr.
unto the
ages of
the ages.

IN this chapter the first point of interest seems to be presented in the construction. As we approach the time of the end, the intensity of the graphic word-painting deepens. When the revelation of the seals was given, there was *no* introductory vision; when the trumpets were announced, there was *one*; here with the "vials" and their outpouring, there are *two*. The chapter is still introductory. We have already had revealed the nature of the three great enemies of the Church, and the preservation and ingathering of God's faithful people; now we see "them that come victorious from the beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name, standing by—or upon—the glassy sea, having harps of God." They sing "the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." I propose to call your attention, in this case, first to any critical points which may be interesting and helpful, and then to try and show you what it is which the chapter introduces us to.

Our attention then is again drawn to the figurative character of the vision. "I saw another *sign* in heaven, great and marvellous." This "sign" sets forth the seven plagues, which are the last, in which is finished the wrath of God. The sight, *as it were* of a glassy sea, takes us back in thought to ch. iv. In our Instruction thereon we referred to the great laver in the temple, which was used for the personal ablutions of the priests, and to the greater and better "laver of regeneration" in the New Testament dispensation, the baptism of water and of the Holy Spirit. Here is seen, so it seems to me, the end of that of which holy baptism was the beginning. The faithful soul *has so passed* the waves and billows of this troublesome world, that it *has come* to the land of everlasting life. It has, "by God's grace," "led the rest of its life according to that beginning." Here the sea of

glass is mingled with fire, and there can, I think, carrying out our plan, be no hesitation in referring it to the baptism of *fire*, which we share with our Lord. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you: but inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of His glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy."

They have "harps of God," instruments, *i.e.*, dedicated to His sole praise, and typical, as we have seen, of heaven's harmony; and they sing "*the song of Moses . . . and the song of the Lamb.*" The idea here set forth is, in my judgment, that of the beginning and ending of the united dispensations. It is true that God's covenant commenced with Abraham, and was continued to Isaac and Jacob; but it was *sealed* to the *people* first under Moses. "Our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea," etc. The Israelites approached Sinai little better, as far as organization went, than a rabble; they left it as a kingdom of priests, a holy *nation*, a peculiar people (God's flock); above all, they left it emphatically as a *Church*, every minutest detail ordered after God's pattern, their aspect towards God, worship; and their aspect towards the surrounding nations (representing in type the world, the flesh, and the devil), uncompromising hostility. They who sing this song have, "like the great leader of Israel of old, like the Lamb of God Himself in the days of His flesh, conquered not merely the world in its coarser forms, but a degenerate theocracy, the world in the Church" (Professor Milligan, "Lectures on the Apocalypse," p. 56). The Old and New Testament saints are essentially one; if they without us are not made perfect, neither are we without them. I need not dwell upon the analogy of the wilderness experience and that of the Christian Church and individual to-day; but we can hardly pass over the triumphant song after the passage of the Red Sea, nor the last song of Moses, recorded in Deut. xxxii. "King of saints" is, in the Revised Version, "king of the ages," or, according to many ancient authorities, "king of the nations," settling for ever God's claim, which the "beast" would have usurped. Verse 4 contains a glorious promise of the ultimate dominion of the Cross, not, surely, to slacken our interest in mission

work, but to strengthen it with the assurance of the ultimate issue of that work. It may be that His visible presence will effect that which we have tried, with only partial success, to effect in His absence; it may be that the conversion of all nations will follow on the coming of Christ; but, against all suggestions to slacken our efforts on this account, we must place our Lord's clear and definite command, "Go ye, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." In this connection we should notice that the manifestation of God's *judgments* is the expressed cause of the ingathering of the nations, and then note further that "judgments" is, in the Revised Version, "righteous acts." God thus asserts His eternal Providence, and justifies His ways to men.

The next verse is very interesting. As in ch. xi. 19, the temple of God that is in heaven was opened, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His covenant, so here that which is brought to view is the tabernacle of *witness* in heaven. St. Stephen mentions this in his apology (Acts vii. 44). The earthly type contained the ark, which in its turn contained "a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant." These tables are called in Exod. xxxiv. 29 "the two tables of testimony." Remember that they were the two tables of the Decalogue, and that it is, therefore, upon this *Law* of God that the force of this part of the revelation rests; it is the groundwork alike of God's justice and of His justification: the tabernacle, with God's righteous Law in it, is a witness *for* the righteous, and against the wicked. Then we have the solemn procession of the seven angels, described as having the seven last plagues, issuing from the temple, or rather from the sanctuary, *i.e.* the holy place *and* the Holy of Holies, as distinguished from the outer court of the temple. It is in the very centre alike of mercy and judgment, and this enhances the picture most powerfully. The angels are, according to our Authorized Version, "clothed in pure and white linen," but, according to the Revised Version, "with precious stone, pure and bright;" the linen thus described reminds us of the priestly garment, and emphasizes the need of its being *pure* (see Lev. vi. 10, and xvi. 4). The other description might, at first, seem unintelligible, but it

is a metaphor which has already occurred in Ezek. xxviii. 13, while we remember also the description of the high priest's breastplate in Exod. xxviii. 17-20. The idea then would be that they were covered all over with a jewel-decked robe. The girdle—golden as was that of the Son of man in ch. i.—is another priestly emblem (see Exod. xxviii. 4 and 8).

Next, one of the four living creatures (mentioned in ch. iv., representing the whole creation once groaning and travailing in pain together with us, but now redeemed), gives to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God. Notice that they are pictured as joining in this work of God, as giving the summons for the execution of judgment, and are thus "workers together with God." Is there a completion here of Eph. iii. 10? There seems an undoubted reference to Moses' song in Deut. xxxii. 39, 40, and in the last verse to Exod. xl. 34, etc. The smoke is that of the Divine glory, such as Isaiah saw in his revelation (see Isa. vi.). As in the giving of the Law, so now in the judgments on the broken Law, the approach to God is barred. Notice that the sanctuary is opened afterwards, never to be closed again.

And now I invite you to notice what it is that the chapter introduces us to. You have seen how many priestly emblems we have had brought before us. All seem to lead us to expect, in connection with the vials, something allied not with the *world*, but with the *Church*. This expectation is justified. Classically the "vial" is the bowl into which the wine was poured from the larger vessel (see Amos vi. 6); but its great interest here is that it was a *tabernacle* vessel (a church vessel, as we should say). The "vials," then, are "bowls," such as were presented among the offerings at the dedication of the tabernacle, one by each of the twelve princes (see Numb. vii.); they were used for offering the incense on the golden altar. Thus they become the most terribly appropriate instruments of the fatal results of neglected spiritual opportunities and of spiritual degeneration and unfaithfulness. Without anticipating too much, "Babylon" will be found to be the representative name of every Church which has been untrue to her marriage union with her Lord. We shall see, very clearly, as I think, that it is not Rome only. The whole scene is another wonderfully appropriate

parallel : " Then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved : but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or there ; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders ; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect." Remember that, in this case, it is the Church, not in her external, but in her internal relations, which is before us ; the evil is in *herself*—false Christs, false prophets, with great signs and wonders. It is appropriate, too, that retribution should be introduced by a sign in heaven " great and marvellous."

Two lessons appear to be clear :

(1) The character of the Church in our own day depends, as far as the general can depend upon the particular, upon ourselves ; as the health of the whole body depends upon that of the individual members, and as the usefulness of the whole depends upon the usefulness of its several parts, so the health and the usefulness of the Church. " Ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof," or, as it is in the margin, " members each in his part." There are " diversities of gifts," but however small ours may be, they are to be employed for the benefit of the whole, and upon our faithful or unfaithful use of them will the state of the whole, in such measure, depend. If the Church, then, is to be found faithful to her betrothed, we must be so individually—faithful to God's Word, to Christ's sacraments, to Catholic doctrine and fellowship, true and loyal to Christ, and brave for Him.

(2) Individually we must look each one to our own inner life : not that which appears before the world only, but that which God sees, as He does in this revelation of the degenerate Church—that which is " naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." So, our own hearts cleansed, and our own innermost thoughts purified, we may hope to be, in our own measure and degree, the means of keeping our dear Church free from the condemnation which is to fall upon spiritual unfaithfulness, and from the sure and terrible results of the abuse or neglect of spiritual gifts and spiritual opportunities.

INSTRUCTION XXXVII.

CHAPTER XVI. 1-11.

16 And I heard a great voice out of the Temple, saying to the seven Angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth, and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

3 And the second Angel poured out his vial upon the sea, and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

4 And the third Angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and they became blood.

5 And I heard the Angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus:

6 For they have shed the blood of Saints and Prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink: for they are worthy.

7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

8 And the fourth Angel poured out his vial upon the Sun, and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

|| Or,
burned.

9; And men were ||scorched

16 And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go ye, and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth.

2 And the first went, and poured out his bowl into the earth; and ¹it became a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and which worshipped his image.

¹ Or,
there
came.

3 And the second poured out his bowl into the sea; and ¹it became blood as of a dead man; and every ²living soul died, *even* the things that were in the sea.

² Gr.
soul of
life.

4 And the third poured out his bowl into the rivers and the fountains of the waters; ³and ¹it became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying, Righteous art thou, which art and which wast, thou Holy One, because thou didst

³ Some
ancient
authori-
ties read
and they
became.

6 thus ⁴judge: for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and blood hast thou given them to drink: they are

⁴ Or,
judge.
Because
they . . .
prophets,
thou hast
given
them
blood
also to
drink.

7 worthy. And I heard the altar saying, Yea, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

8 And the fourth poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given unto ⁵it to scorch men

⁵ Or,
him.

9 with fire. And men were

with great heat, and blasphemed the Name of God, which hath power over these plagues : and they repented not, to give him glory.

10 And the fifth Angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast, and his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

11 And blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains, and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

scorched with great heat : and they blasphemed the name of the God which hath the power over these plagues ; and they repented not to give him glory.

10 And the fifth poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast ; and his kingdom was darkened ; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

11 and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores ; and they repented not of their works.

It is important to notice, at the outset of this Instruction, that we are treating the "vials" as the appropriate instruments of the fatal results of either the abuse or the neglect of spiritual opportunities. The whole scene is a commentary in act on Mal. ii. 2. Moreover, it will be evident to us, as we proceed, that the plagues of Egypt, in most cases, shape the imagery, and thus furnish another illustration of the same truth ; for the Nile, both then and now the source of Egypt's blessing of fertility, becomes the source of their first curse. We shall notice, too, that the judgments of the seals and of the trumpets are here intensified ; and, moreover, that the temporal and material blessings, which leave men without excuse for not acknowledging the eternal Power and Godhead of the King Eternal, Immortal, and Invisible, are not only the subjects of the curses, but are so in the very order in which God first gave them as blessings to man (see Gen. i. 9, 10, 14).

Proceeding with the critical interpretation first ; "the temple" in verse 1 is, as before, the "sanctuary," and the "Great Voice" which speaks is the Voice of God Himself ; as at the giving of the law that Voice was heard amidst awe-full surroundings, so now even more fearfully, for the hour of judgment is come. The angels are, in the present instance, not those of the seven Churches, but "messengers" of God's wrath. The time is, clearly, subsequent to the appearing of the beast, for the first "vial" is poured out upon the *earth* (under the seals the fourth part, under the trumpets the third part, and here the whole is smitten) ; it is poured out in such a way that it

affects those who have the mark of the beast and have worshipped his image, *i.e.* those who have willingly gone into, and willingly remained in, religious error in opposition to the Church, and in this have joined the God-opposing world-power; the world-power, exalted and deified by the erring religious power is affected in the persons of its votaries. The parallel plague in Egypt is that of the boils, and is appropriately placed first, because it prevented the magicians (representing the false religion of Egypt) from standing before Moses. The parallel of the second and third "vials" (the structure being most remarkable, like that of the second and third trumpets) is clearly with the turning of the waters into blood, only that it is here intensified in a fearful way, as the blood of a dead man, an idea which, while it may fill us with loathing, is meant, perhaps, to stand in contrast with that which man became by God's gift, which he has here slighted and abused, "a living soul." Notice the reading in the Revised Version, "every living soul died, even the things that were in the sea." It need hardly be said that the whole scene is figurative. And now in vs. 5 and 7 we have an incidental digression. The angel of the waters speaks in acknowledgment of the righteousness of God, in that which He has done. Notice that it is God in His Triune Majesty—"which art and which wast, Thou Holy One" (not "shalt be"—because God has now come).

Now, who is the angel of the waters? It may be the one who presides over them, but hardly he who poured out his "vial" upon them. If we are correct in this, the judgment of God is, so to speak, confirmed by this portion of creation itself, speaking by its representative angel. With great diffidence I suggest another interpretation. Is there, under the vials, positively no hope, no repentance, and no room for repentance? May we not have at least a little hope, that, under so terrible a judgment, some may acknowledge, as did the penitent thief, that they "suffer justly, for they receive the due reward of their deeds"? and so join the ranks of the "happy suffering souls, consumed yet quickened by the glance of God"?¹ The saints must rejoice over the triumph of the right, they must acknowledge the justice of the retribution on their enemies; but surely it is not they who are pictured as worthy of

¹ Dream of Gerontius.

drinking the blood of their enemies, and as rejoicing in it! It is, I think, rather the enemies of the Church who are "worthy of," *i.e.* "deserve," this retribution in kind. Compare, as justifying this view, Isa. xlix. 26, "I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob." But is it quite hopeless to think that at the last those under this "vial" may acknowledge their sin, by the mouth of the angel? And thus may not his cry, "Righteous art Thou, which art and which wast, Thou Holy One, because Thou didst thus judge" be paraphrased as meaning, "they deserve it, and they acknowledge it, and in their name I confirm the punishment"? It is not definitely said of these, "they repented not." I repeat that I suggest this with the greatest diffidence, but I think that the view that a representative is speaking for those whom he represents, is strengthened by the personification of the altar, which speaks the acquiescence of the martyred souls, for the correct reading in the next verse is, "I heard the altar saying,"—*i.e.* the altar underneath which were seen "the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held,"—"Yea, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments." Thus they who have been on God's side and they who have been against Him, all assent to His righteous judgments, and the prophecy is fulfilled, "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." In the pouring out of the fourth "vial" we notice again the increase of the intensity of the sun's power as contrasted with its diminution under the fourth trumpet when one-third of it was darkened. The result in this plague which is in supreme *contrast* to that of the thick darkness of Egypt, is that which falls always upon the heart which is not softened and melted by chastisement—it becomes harder. Be careful to notice that it is the followers of the beast, the God-opposing world-power, who suffer. All this is applicable to a body of men who have accepted that which Christ refused, in His temptation. "The devil, taking Him up into an high mountain, showed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All

this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If Thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be Thine." What Christ refused, these have accepted, and they have their portion and their reward here. On the eschatological question involved I can only say that punishment, or rather the result of disobedience, *must* be conterminous with *sin*. If there be no repentance there can be no salvation. As long as a man goes on in sin, so long must he suffer. With the pouring out of the fifth "vial," we go (with joy and gladness, if, as God's children, we want to see all opposition to Him destroyed) away from the sufferings of our *fellow-men*, which fill us with sorrow—how much more must they fill with sorrow the heart of Jesus!—to see the source of all the misery and woe which has been described—the *throne* of the beast, the God-opposing world-power—now attacked. St. John had already seen this throne revealed (see ch. xiii. 2). By the pouring out of the "vial" upon the *throne*, not only the centre of iniquity, but everything which radiates from it, is attacked, and the evil in its whole and collected form is seen coming under the wrath of God. The darkness is parallel with the ninth plague of Egypt. "They gnaw their tongues for pain;" the word used hardly suggests physical pain, so much as toil and drudgery, and so, secondarily, distress and trouble. "Double, double, toil and trouble," brought on by the accumulation of their woes, and terribly aggravated by the darkness. Notice that previously, in ch. xi. 13, repentance has followed on the judgments of God; now it does not. We are clearly told "they repented not." It is a very solemn picture, and we must weigh it well; from it I would suggest two practical applications:—

(1) Let us learn to look to the *end*, when we are tempted to sin. As we have seen, these men have fallen before the temptation of the devil, "All these things will I give, if," etc. The devil has kept his promise, but it has been accompanied by the sure and certain sorrow, and by that gradual hardness of heart which comes with the repetition of the act of sin, like the callous growth on foot or hand.

I suppose no one would ever fall into a deadly sin unless it first of all presented to him its attractive side. All sin means suffering; but men forget this, and go on under the

glamour of its seeming attractiveness, and, with each step away from God, repentance becomes harder. They are found stifling the warnings of conscience, and stopping their ears to the whispers of the Holy Spirit, and then, when judgment comes, as surely as effect follows cause, they blame the very God whom they have forsaken, blame Him with blaspheming lips, and a stony and unrepentant heart. Remember, too, that though this vision is figurative, it sets forth in figure a real and certain truth—penalty is the child of unrepented transgressions—God's violated laws avenge themselves, and thus become the "angels," or "messengers," who pour out the "vials." We might search very long before we met with a finer expression of this truth than that given us by our great poet in "The Ghost Scene" in *King Richard the Third*, act v. sc. 3.

The unhappy monarch, starting out of his dream, cries—

"Give me another horse,—bind up my wounds,—
Have mercy, Jesu !—soft :—I did but dream,—
O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me !—
The lights burnt blue.—It is now dead midnight.
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
What do I fear ? Myself ? There's none else by :
Richard loves Richard ; that is, I am I.
Is there a murderer here ? No ;—Yes ; I am :
Then fly,—what, from myself ? Great reason : why ?
Lest I revenge. What ? myself on myself ?
I love myself. Wherefore ? For any good,
That I myself have done unto myself ?
O, no ; Alas, I rather hate myself,
For hateful deeds committed by myself.
I am a villain : yet I lie, I am not.
Fool, of thyself speak well :—fool, do not flatter.
My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain.
Perjury, perjury, in the high'st degree,
Murder, stern murder, in the dir'st degree ;
All several sins, all us'd in each degree ;
Throng to the bar, crying all,—guilty ! guilty !
I shall despair.—There is no creature loves me ;
And, if I die, no soul will pity me :—
Nay, wherefore should they ? Since that I myself
Find in myself no pity to myself.
Methought, the souls of all that I had murdered
Came to my tent ; and every one did threat
To-morrow's vengeance on the head of Richard."

Remember that it will never be *easier* for any one to repent than it is to-day.

(2) “Let us return unto our Lord God, with all contrition and meekness of heart, bewailing and lamenting our sinful life, acknowledging and confessing our offences, and seeking to bring forth worthy fruits of penance. . . . Let us return unto Him who is the merciful receiver of all true penitent sinners, assuring ourselves that He is ready to receive us, and most willing to pardon us, if we come unto Him with faithful repentance.”¹

These words, so familiar to us all, are based on God’s own promise—“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

¹ Communion Office.

INSTRUCTION XXXVIII.

CHAPTER xvi. 12-16.

12 And the sixth Angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the Kings of the East might be prepared.

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14 For they are the spirits of devils working miracles, which go forth unto the Kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 *Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

16 And he gathered them together into a place, called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.

12 And the sixth poured out his bowl upon the great river, the river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way might be made ready for the kings that come from the sun-rising. And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, as it were

13 frogs: for they are spirits of devils, working signs; which go forth² unto the kings of the whole³ world, to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God, the

14 Almighty. (Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.)

15 And they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon.

¹ Gr. demons.

² Or, upon.

³ Gr. inhabited earth.

* Matt. 24. 44.

IN dealing with the incidents connected with the sixth "vial" it would seem that difficulty has arisen in the minds of some, in attaching to the entry of the kings of the east a beneficent result. The difficulty is, however, removed, if we remember that we are dealing now with the judgments outpoured, not upon erring individuals merely, but upon the source and fountain-head of evil itself. No merely negative getting rid of evil can by itself complete the intention of God in His restitution of all things: Divine

grace abhors a vacuum just as much as nature does. There must, therefore, be the replacing of that evil, with positive and corresponding good. The picture thus becomes not only intelligible, but most interesting and helpful. Some have imagined that the parallel is that of the Israelites in going through the Red Sea as on dry land, following on the plagues above mentioned ; but I think myself that it is the literal capture of Babylon that is referred to ; this opinion is strengthened by the actual mention of Cyrus the Persian in other passages of Holy Writ. Two may be referred to with special interest ; viz. Isa. xlv. 27, 28, and xlv. 11. The story of the capture of Babylon, as recorded by Herodotus, is this : In the reign of Nitocris, the river Euphrates (on which Babylon is built) used to overflow its banks. The queen accordingly took steps to alter its course, breaking the force of the current by many windings ; and, a long distance from Babylon, she made an immense reservoir to receive the overflowing waters. Cyrus invested the city for a long time, but his efforts were unsuccessful. Finding that he had no chance against it, he placed a large force at the two spots where the river entered and left the city, and then despatched a detachment to turn the upper waters into the reservoir, upon which, the bed of the river becoming dry, "the way of the king of the east was literally prepared," and the destruction of Babylon followed. Spiritualizing the picture, we see that the seat of spiritual unfaithfulness, the centre of confusion and division, though built up by the protecting temporal power, is to come under the judgment of God, with the result that the faithful themselves, made unto their God kings and priests, shall enter into and possess the kingdom, under Christ, the King of the east ; thus is another wonderful parallel with the "last things" revealed : "As the lightning cometh out of the *east*, and shineth even unto the west ; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." There may be also possibly an allusion to the corresponding experience of the Church, when the kings of the east, at the first Epiphany, worshipped before Christ, and presented unto Him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

We have now another parenthetical digression contained in vs. 13 and 14, followed by a warning in verse 15. It is all-important to note that the three great enemies of God and His Church are again introduced, but the second beast

is before us under a new and most appropriate title, "the false prophet." Remember—

(1) The "dragon" is that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.

(2) The first beast is the God-opposing world-power, not of one particular nation, but in its comprehensive development.

(3) The second beast, identical now with the false prophet, is the Church-opposing and truth-opposing power of religious error, again not of one particular nation, but in its comprehensive development.

The word "come" (Authorized Version), or "coming," as it is in the Revised Version, is not in the original. Strictly translated we should read, "I saw out of the mouth of the dragon," etc.; we may fall in, therefore, with the suggestion that the three unclean spirits like frogs are seen by St. John coming one out of each of the three beasts, and are meant to signify the nature of each. They are all of them, therefore, separately and distinctly evil, but they are united together in their unholy mission. The picture is thus seen to be at once collective and individual. This union of the forces of iniquity, each force as vile and bad as the other, is a very important point, for as God has been seen gathering *His* forces together, so the *opposing* ranks are being here united. They are influenced in the direction which is against God by three unclean spirits like frogs. The symbolism is suggested by that Egyptian plague, of which uncleanness was one of the most distressing features, for they gathered the frogs into heaps, and the land stank. But, happily, we have no need to conjecture as to the meaning of the symbolism, for we are expressly told what it is. The frogs are (R.V.) spirits of devils, or demons, working signs. Here, again, the parallel with Our Lord's discourse on the last things is most striking: "There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders" (St. Matt. xxiv. 24). All this evil is seen in its utmost power, so that *all* the enemies of God, the kings of the *whole world*, or inhabited earth, are gathered together "unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty." Without anticipating too much, it is worth noticing that when the supreme moment comes, the saints do not have to fight; as at the passage of the Red Sea it was said, "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall

hold your peace," so here God fights for His saints (see ch. xx. 9). Then are passages like Zech. xiii. 2 finally fulfilled: "I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land." It is important to remember that *three* things—

(1) The spirit of infidelity, which would dethrone God from His rightful place;

(2) The spirit which leads to opposition to God in the world, to lawlessness, and to the banishment of God from art, music, politics, education, and so on (see 2 Thess. ii. 8, 9);

(3) The spirit which leads to selfish or self-willed selection of pet doctrines or heresies, in contravention of the Catholic faith; are all brought under one head—they are unclean, spiritually.

Then we come to the parenthetic warning (verse 15) which furnishes us at once with our own lesson, and with one of the most interesting parallels we have yet met with, occurring as it does in each of the synoptic Gospels (see St. Matt. xxiv. 42–44, xxv. 13; St. Mark xiii. 32–37; St. Luke xxi. 34–36). Just as at the taking of Babylon, or at the loss of Belshazzar's kingdom, they were surprised and overwhelmed, while feasting, in thoughtlessness and sin, so the message comes to all: "Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good-man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of man cometh." And it is the more necessary for *us* to watch because "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

One noteworthy point is the *individual* exhortation here given. "Blessed is *he* that watcheth, and keepeth his garments," etc. The metaphor of the garments will be clear; it is the robe of Christ's righteousness, not imputed only, but imparted also; not justification only, but sanctification too; the parable in St. Matt. xxii. 11, 12 will at once recur to us; and we are bidden *each one of us* to be on the watch *now*. This is not only a great *future* scene, but one in which our future position depends very greatly upon our *present*. These enemies, of which we have been

thinking especially to-day, are in the midst of *us*. "Watch! Watch! Watch!" In politics, in the great education question, in the ever-multiplying phases of religious error, as well as in the personal and daily trials and temptations of our own life, "watch"—"Watch and pray." The "coming as a thief" is a metaphor for the suddenness of the advent. It is the terror of God's enemies, but the encouragement and joy of His people. The parallel is in St. Luke xxi. 25-28. If we want a prayer to sum up in most expressive language what we desire to say, we shall hardly find a better than this, from our beautiful Litany: "O God, merciful Father, that despisest not the sighing of a contrite heart, nor the desire of such as be sorrowful; Mercifully assist our prayers that we make before Thee in all our troubles and adversities, whensoever they oppress us; and graciously hear us, that those evils, which the craft and subtilty of the devil or man worketh against us, be brought to nought; and by the providence of Thy goodness they may be dispersed; that we Thy servants, being hurt by no persecutions, may evermore give thanks unto Thee in Thy holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

I have only to add, on the 16th verse, that the Revised Version reads "they" for "he," the "they" probably meaning the unclean spirits; that which we are to notice chiefly is the gathering *together*, for the *final* struggle, of the hosts on *both* sides into *one* place. St. John, as is his wont, explains that the name of this place is Hebrew, "Har-Magedon." "Har" means "mountain," and "Magedon" is the same as "Megiddo," which means "destruction." It is stated to be the same as the plain of Esdraelon, styled by Dean Stanley "the battle-field of Jewish history." We recall at once two great battles—the one in which Deborah and Barak triumphed marvellously against Jabin, King of Canaan, and the other in which the unfortunate Josiah, the dearly-loved king, went to war with Pharaoh-Necho, in which it is related with curt impressiveness that "he slew him at Megiddo when he had seen him." The Prophet Zechariah seems to allude to this in ch. xii. of his prophecy, referring to 2 Chron. xxxv. 25; but our main point is this—

The *entire*, *absolute*, and *final* defeat of all the enemies of God, and of His Church, is assured.

"Then cometh the end, when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power."

INSTRUCTION XXXIX.

CHAPTER XVI. 17 TO END.

17 And the seventh Angel poured out his vial into the air, and there came a great voice out of the Temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

18 And there were voices and thunders, and lightnings: and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

19 And the great City was divided into three parts, and the Cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, *to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

* Jer.
25. 15.

20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent, and men blasphemed God, because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

17 And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air; and there came forth a great voice out of the temple, from the throne,

18 saying, It is done: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since ¹there were men upon the earth, so great an earthquake,

19 so mighty. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of

20 his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not

21 found. And great hail, every stone about the weight of a talent, cometh down out of heaven upon men: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof is exceeding great.

¹ Some ancient authorities read *there was a man.*

WE notice that, as the fifth angel poured out his "vial" upon the throne of the beast, so the seventh does upon the *air*, the element which we are taught in Holy Scripture to associate with the dragon, or devil. He is "the prince of the power of the *air*, the spirit which now worketh in the children of disobedience." In the Revised Version, the

words "of heaven" are omitted from verse 17. The "Great Voice" is generally understood to be that of God Himself, announcing the completion of His purposes; and there may be a parallel between the one word, translated "It is done," and our Lord's cry upon the cross (also one word only), "It is finished." The accompaniments are "lightnings, and voices, and thunders," and a "great earthquake," so terrible that there has been none like it since there was a man upon the earth. Note well the accompaniment of the crucifixion, and the prophecy of our Lord Himself, "There shall be earthquakes in divers places." All are meant to emphasize the terrible nature of the accompaniments of God's judgments. The result is the division of the great city into three parts. We may interestingly note the prophecy as to the division of Belshazzar's kingdom between the Medes and Persians in connection with that which we have already remarked about Cyrus, the "king of the East," whose way was literally prepared to enter the literal Babylon. The "three parts" may only mean the practical disruption of the city; but, if we are to press the point, it would seem that we must ally it with the three unclean spirits, each developing his own abomination in his own section.

And now, what is meant by the great city? If we look back to ch. xi. 8, "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of 'the great city,' which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified," we can hardly come to any other conclusion than that it is Jerusalem. This view is strengthened by a reference to Ezek. v. 1-4, and xi. 12. But it is Jerusalem whose literal fate foreshadows, as in the discourse upon the four last things, other solemn and yet future events; Jerusalem as the type of the Christ-rejecting world-power, allied with the Church-persecuting religious power, and, therefore, not Jerusalem only, but the place, wherever it is, where, for the time being, these forms of evil may be centred. "Babylon" is a fitting title for such, because it was there that was made "that first attempt to array a world-empire against God, ere mankind was first dispersed; and so it is the apter symbol of the antitheist or Anti-Christian world, which, by violence, art, falsehood, sophistry, wars against the truth." (See Dr. Pusey's Commentary on Zech. v. 11.)

The next question is, "What is meant by 'the cities of

the nations'?" We must bear in mind the important fact that the judgments of God upon the Church's foes are the Church's own deliverances: "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." These, then, probably represent the minor powers which are associated with the Church's enemies; when the great seat of iniquity falls, they fall with it. It must be so; the eradication of evil must be final and complete; for the sake of the Church, and of the truth, and for the final triumph of God over Satan, and good over evil, no city, not even the little city of Zoar, can now be spared. We are, I think, fully justified in spiritualizing such a thought, and also in applying it to ourselves as individuals. God, in His righteous faithfulness, will not spare a single sin, however small; by some means or other, by the terrible if the gentle will not do, by that which corresponds with fire, or earthquake, or hail, or any other so-called plague (which, in each original case meant the progressive deliverance of His own people), God will, and *must* eradicate all sin out of our hearts and lives. One good test of our faithfulness is whether we can truly pray, with all our hearts, "Lord, at all costs get rid of my sin."

The fall of Babylon is to be dealt with more fully in subsequent passages, and we have already noticed such expressions as "the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath;" the warning had been given previously (ch. xiv. 8-10). In the subsequent imagery we have yet another parallel (St. Matt. xxiv. 35). The whole earth is broken up and changed, for it is to become a "new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (see also Nah. i. 5-7): "The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at His presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before His indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him. The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him."

The seventh plague in Egypt suggests, it would seem, the next symbolism, that of the great hail. Such a picture is most appropriate, for it has been previously allied, in prophecy, with unfaithfulness in *teaching* (see Ezek. xiii. 11). A passage from Josephus is well worth transcribing,

as it has reference to the actual destruction of Jerusalem. "The stone-throwing engines, which all the legions had prepared for them, were admirably contrived; but still more extraordinary ones belonged to the tenth legion; those that threw darts and those that threw stones, were more forcible and larger than the rest, by which they not only repelled the excursions of the Jews, but drove those away that were upon the walls also. Now, the stones that were cast were of the weight of a talent" (*i.e.* 93 lbs. 12 oz. avoirdupois), "and were carried two furlongs and farther" (Jos., "B. J." v. 6. 3). He goes on to speak not only of the blow which they gave, but of the attempts of the watchmen to warn the Jews. They could see when the engine was let go, could hear the noise which the stone made in rushing through the air, and could track its course, and they cried aloud, "The stone cometh."

In the last verse the expression "men" must, I think, be taken figuratively, to mean the *ungodly*. This seems the more clear as, otherwise, all men would be included in the consequent blasphemy. The great point then is that, as before, and as with Pharaoh in Egypt, even the sore judgments of God produce no repentance. Further details follow, preparatory to the final judgment. But we must not anticipate.

How solemnly does the lesson come home to each one of us, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee"! How earnestly does it bid us pray against "hardness of heart," and that it may please God "to give us true repentance"! "Keep Thy servant also from presumptuous sins, lest they get the dominion over me." As we look back there must be, amidst much to quicken hope and awaken thanksgiving, much to produce self-reproach and self-condemnation. If this be true and genuine, leading to repentance, confession, and earnest amendment, we know that God will, in His infinite mercy, spare us and forgive. Then and thus it is that His judgments themselves will give us hope, for surely it is one of the greatest proofs of love, and a proof also that we are worth dealing with, not to leave us unchastened. May the very awfulness of the judgment upon sin, this plague of the hail, which "*is*," not "*was*" exceeding great (perpetuating the idea of the intensity of God's judgments on sin), prove a blessing, quickening our ears to hear, and our hearts to act

upon, His present calls ; and in all our chastisement may there be more and more deepened—

“The assured belief
That the procession of our fate, howe'er
Sad and disturbed, is ordered by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power,
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good.”

WORDSWORTH.

INSTRUCTION XL.

CHAPTER xvii. 1-5.

17 And there came one of the seven Angels, which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither, I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great Whore, that sitteth upon many waters :

2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

3 So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness : and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and †decked with gold, and precious stone and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.

5 And upon her forehead was a name written, *MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF* || *HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*

† *Gr.*
gilded.

|| *Or,*
fornica-
tions.

17 And there came one of the seven angels that had the seven bowls, and spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the judgement of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters ;

2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and they that dwell in the earth were made drunken with the wine of her fornication.

3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness : and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast, ¹full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and ²decked with gold and precious stone and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations, ³even the unclean things

5 of her fornication, and upon her forehead a name written, ⁴*MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*

¹ *Or,*
names
full of
blas-
phemy.

² *Gr.*
gilded.

³ *Or,*
and of
the un-
clean
things.

⁴ *Or, a*
mystery,
BABY-
LOH THE
GREAT.

It seems a matter of little practical moment to decide which of the seven angels carries on the revelation to St. John. It is probably the seventh, as indicated in the previous chapter. The revelation itself, on the other hand, is *all-important*. It consists of the judgment of the "great

harlot, that sitteth upon many waters." What the "waters" are there is no difficulty in deciding, for we are told specifically in verse 15, "The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." They are the people of the whole world, irrespective of clime, or nation, or speech. The "sitting" upon the waters symbolizes *authority* over these; the exact parallel is in Jer. li. 12, 13. There is an evident reference also in vs. 2 and 4 to vs. 6 and 7 of that chapter, the "golden cup" probably denoting splendour and opulence, just as in the image of the "head of gold" seen by King Nebuchadnezzar. This seems clearly to show that the judgment is not upon any single or particular city, but upon something which exercises power in every quarter of the globe. The terrible symbolism of the "harlot" is also not difficult. It is employed over and over again in Holy Scripture, and, while it frequently indicates mighty influence and power, its application is, with three exceptions, that of unfaithfulness to God and unholy alliance with His enemies, the breach of the covenant relationship between God and His people, and, in New Testament times, spiritual unfaithfulness to the Bridegroom, Christ. As each unhappy woman of the class which furnishes the illustration had, in the days of paganism, her name attached to her forehead, so has this "great harlot." It is, however, as we are distinctly told, "a mystery," and we must therefore treat it figuratively. It must, I imagine, mean something which is not only in itself a wrong and a guilty thing—something which is against God and His Church and His truth—but *something which leads others into wrong* and into spiritual unfaithfulness. Moreover, as it is "Babylon," the centre of *confusion* and *division*, these elements must also be looked for in the interpretation. Yet again, the woman is seen "sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast," which *carries* her. If scarlet is to be taken as the colour of kingly attire, it heightens the view of the beast as the God-opposing will-power. That this is meant there can, I think, be little doubt, as the description is so closely akin to that in ch. xiii. 1. The picture before us, then, describes something which exercises power and influence upon the God-opposing world-power, assisting and guiding it in its evil ways and aims, and which the God-opposing world-power assists in its turn. The great question is, "What is

meant?" Is it "Rome"? I venture to say that I do not think it is. It is true that there is no *primâ facie* difficulty in applying it even to pagan Rome, for the symbol of the harlot is applied in Old Testament Scriptures to heathen cities like Tyre and Nineveh, and to a heathen woman like Jezebel; papal Rome is also, no doubt, a powerful *illustration* once again, but she does not *fill up* the picture here any more than she has previously. The influence of the papal see is widespread, and its guidance and direction of the temporal powers, even to the crowned heads, is in most remarkable correspondence with the picture. Moreover, she has been terribly unfaithful, and has departed from primitive and Catholic truth in many ways too well known for me to dwell upon. "Her idolatries," as Professor Milligan says,¹ "her outward carnal splendour, her oppression of God's saints, her merciless cruelties with torture, the dungeon, and the stake, the tears and agonies and blood with which she has filled so many centuries—these and a thousand circumstances of a similar kind, may well be our excuse if in 'Babylon' we read 'Christian Rome.'" I am no champion of the Church of Rome; but I do want, as far as in me lies, to champion the truth, and I say solemnly and advisedly that no one, unless his eyes are blinded by ignorance, and his mind warped by prejudice, could for one moment say that "Rome" *filled up* the picture. The harlot is, *altogether, from head to foot*, a harlot, decked and arrayed with her accompaniments and trappings. No one can say that Rome, with all her faults, is *wholly* apostate from the truth, or *wholly* unfaithful to God. In the interests of truth let us look at the other side: and I cannot do better than quote from Professor Milligan again:—"She has maintained the truth of Christ against idolatry and unchristian error, has preferred poverty to splendour in a way that Protestantism has never done; she has nurtured some of the noblest types of devotion that the world has ever seen." There are thousands who, by birth and education members of her, are, in spite of the faults which mark her, as faithful and true servants of the Lord and Master as any who exist to-day, and who would yield to no one in their love and devotion to their Saviour. To quote once more from the same author:—"Above all, it has *not* been the chief effort

¹ "Lectures on the Apocalypse," p. 183, *et seq.*

of Rome to ally herself with kings ; if at times she has done so, there have been other times still more characteristic of her, when she has rather trampled kings beneath her feet, and when, in the interests of the poor and the oppressed, she has taught both proud barons and imperial tyrants to quail before her. For deeds like this her record is not with the Beast, but with the Lamb." All honour to the Presbyterian Professor who penned these noble words.

We must, therefore, go further afield than Rome ; and there is, I think, something all-important to guide us in our fresh search, in the words of our Blessed Lord recorded in St. Matt. xii. 39. When the scribes and Pharisees demand from Him a sign, our Lord uses a similar metaphor to this—notice the words—"An evil and *adulterous* generation seeketh after a sign ;" so that what is meant is, I believe, not the Church itself wholly gone wrong, for this interpretation would involve us in great subsequent difficulties, as well as being contrary to Christ's promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world ;" neither is it, I believe, any particular Church, but an unfaithful and degenerate Christianity, whether it be found in Church or individual. I think that in no age of the Church were we in greater danger of this than we are now, and I believe that faithful speaking was never more needed than it is to-day. While there is much to be deeply thankful for, in increased energy and zeal, in piety and philanthropy, men were, perhaps, never so inclined to be a law unto themselves. We are called upon by some nowadays "for the sake of unity," and in the sacred name of religious liberty (!) to sacrifice essential parts of the Catholic faith, as of little or no importance ; to whittle down our creeds (which have hedged in the truth for us for many a long century) till they consist simply in a general declaration of faith in Jesus Christ ; to knock off a little bit of truth here and a little bit more there, until only a *torso* is left in the place of the divinely articulated body of Divinity. And what is the *certain* result ? It is and it must be "BABEL" !—*confusion, division, and spiritual unfaithfulness*. Moreover, it means, as the years roll on, the *certain* spread of infidelity, as men, knowing neither what to believe nor what to reject, cast everything overboard ! Many are doing so already. I believe

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to be a very powerful illustration of this revelation, and to fill in the details of the picture much more than any individual Church does. I feel sure it will prove the teeming mother of infidelity.

Some may think me very uncharitable, narrow-minded, and bigoted, as they read these words. So was our Lord thought by scribes and Pharisees as He denounced their unfaithfulness, and poured forth His scathing utterances of woe. "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master." The truth is at stake, and it is time for all who love Christ, and who believe in Him, His Church, and Her mission, to speak out. Nevertheless, I would guard myself against the idea that I am here attacking Dissenters. I am not. I mourn, it is true, over Dissent. I look upon it as one of the greatest evils. Men who love the truth, instead of leaving our Church, should stay in her, and strive to purify her, if they believe her to be unsound. No one can pretend that she is hopelessly corrupt. The weakness of Christendom lies in its divisions; the internecine strife which accompanies them uses much of the time and strength which should be devoted to battle against our common foes; this involves an immense waste of our spiritual resources, and a loss of the *fulness* of God's blessing. The Church's complete triumph can only be fully realized, I believe, when all Christians are gathered into her once again. But I would not stay the hand of any who in any way are striving to bring men to a knowledge of sin and of Jesus Christ, even though I could not work with them on their sectarian lines. The evil which I would warn all against is rather one into which all, Churchmen and Nonconformists alike, may fall. It puts politics before religion, expediency before principles, unity before faithfulness. It would cheapen "the faith once for all delivered unto the saints," at the expense of Catholic truth. Seen in conjunction with the God-opposing world-power, it is one of the saddest sights that they who value the spread of truth can ever gaze upon. Though I do not say that it *wholly* fills up the picture, any more than Judah, or Israel, or Jerusalem, or Rome does, yet it is, in my judgment, quite the most powerful illustration of it, and is, moreover, a danger to which we are, at this present time, actually exposed.

“Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

From being partakers in any sense of the sin of the harlot, the sin of degenerate Christianity allied with, and helping on the God-opposing world-power, and being helped by it in its turn, “Good Lord, deliver us.”

INSTRUCTION XLI.

CHAPTER xvii. 6-10.

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the Martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

7 And the Angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

8 The beast that thou sawest, was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition, and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world) when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

10 And there are seven Kings, five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come: and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the ¹martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with a great wonder.

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and

8 the ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss, ²and to go into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, *they* whose name hath not been written ³in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast, how that he was, and is not, and ⁴shall

9 come. Here is the ⁵mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth: and ⁶they are seven kings; the five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a little while.

¹ Or, witnesses.

² Some ancient authorities read *and he goeth*.

³ Gr. *on*.

⁴ Gr. *shall be present*.

⁵ Or, meaning.

⁶ Or, *there are*.

WE have seen that, if our interpretation is correct, the "woman," the "great harlot," is not any particular Church, but an unfaithful and degenerate Christianity, the evil and danger of which is world-wide. This is made the more clear by the statement in ch. xviii. 3, which is

allied with the passage now under our consideration. The contrast is between "the city of righteousness, the faithful city," and "the faithful city become a harlot" (see Isa. i. 21), or between the Babylon of the earth (the term being employed in its fullest figurative sense) and "Jerusalem above," the pure and spiritual mother of us all (ch. xxi. 2). There could hardly be a more striking contrast. The latter is the type of the true and faithful Church, which will have to the very end the life of Christ in her, and thus also men and women preserved by the grace of God, and so in their turn preserving others; while the other is going to, and spreading, corruption. "Ye are the salt of the earth;" "Salt is good, but if the salt have lost his savour" (an illustration of the Church faithless and degenerate), "wherewith shall it be salted?"

We see *the woman*, then, "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus:" this is a *very* strong argument in favour of our opinion that the revelation is not of Rome only. This terrible picture belongs clearly to degenerate religion generally. "The blood of the saints, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the sanctuary and the altar," does *not* lie at the door of Rome, but it *does* lie at the door of this "harlot." So does the blood of Christ Himself, and, down through the long ages of struggling Christianity, the blood of all others, who, from the protomartyr Stephen down to the victims of the latest heathen massacre, have died in defence of Jesus, His Church, and His truth. The faithful Church is the chaste woman; the unfaithful, wherever situated, a child of "the mother of harlots." When St. John saw her "he wondered"—not, of course, "with great admiration" in its modern sense, but with "a great wonder." He marvelled, and that not so much at her gorgeous array, and at her decking of gold, and precious stone, and pearls, as at the awful change! Compare Jer. v. 30, 31: "A wonderful and horrible thing is come to pass in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" See also Jer. xxiii. 14. It is with every Church as it is with woman; when she falls she falls the furthest.

Bear with me if I say a word about this as akin to our

subject. The literature of the present day, so far as it comes from woman's pen (with, thank God, noble exceptions), is often of a most questionable character. "Have you read such and such a book?" "No; who is it by?" Some woman's name is mentioned as the authoress, and a frequent answer is, "Oh, then I must read it for myself before I let my daughters see it!" There can be but one result if this goes on: the gradual lowering of the whole tone of society, the gradual decline of that purity and morality which are its God-given safeguards, and the gradual decadence of the religious life. It is for pure and virtuous women, before the python is full-grown, before the lion has tasted human blood, before the snowflake has gathered into an avalanche, to boycott every book that comes from the pen of author or authoress who has been guilty of writing and publishing works of an immoral, irreligious, or sceptical tendency, and to do so⁴ in the sacred Name of Christ, as witnesses for Him. Do not be led away by the cry of the necessary advancement of knowledge; that was the old temptation of the wily serpent, "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." We may all wonder when we see it—wonder with a great wonder! Here is woman—woman to whom we have been taught to look up, to treat with respect and with chivalry, to admire and love for her almost innate purity and religious fervour; woman who owes her social freedom to Christianity; woman handing down to posterity, for souls yet unborn to drink, cups full of deadly poison! Pardon the digression; it affords only another illustration, and one close to hand, of the fearful picture.

Now to return. When St. John wonders, the angel proceeds to tell him the mystery, but he does so in a way which is itself mysterious. We must refer first of all to ch. xi. 7, where we noticed that the beast ascending out of the abyss meant the hostile world-power, and that there he was seen employed by Satan as his instrument; so it is here. Notice, too, that the statement "he was and is not" is emphatic and important. It is stated three times: here, at the close of this verse, and in v. 11. It seems almost certain that we have here another travesty of God, receiving glory in His threefold being, "as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be." The travesty would seem to extend also to our Blessed Lord, in His life on earth, His

precious death, His glorious resurrection and ascension ; "he was, and is not, and yet is." For our own comfort we should notice that the resurrection of the beast, and his apparently restored powers, are only preliminaries to his going into perdition, and that speedily. The beast, as we have seen, is the anti-Christian world-power, and I need not repeat the arguments and illustrations which have been so often given. It will be enough to note that we must *expect* this unholy alliance between degenerate Christianity, a Christ-opposing, Church-opposing world-power, and Satan himself. The worldly rejoice and wonder at the restoration to power, but it is only temporary. The order of events would seem to be—

(1) The rule of the world-power without God and against God.

(2) The triumph of the Cross.

(3) The partial restoration of the anti-Christian world-power, synchronous with the love of many waxing cold.

(4) The final and complete overthrow of evil, and triumph of good.

The "wisdom which cometh from above" can alone interpret verse 9, "Here is the mind" (or meaning) "which hath wisdom." Thus it would seem that we are again warned against an interpretation which is wholly satisfied by one city, or by one Church only. If "Rome," seated on the seven hills, suggests itself at once, the very fact that it does so should warn us that something more extensive is intended, which needs "*nous*" (the Divinely given power of perception) to understand. They who imagine that Rome satisfies this revelation naturally make much of this passage. They say, and say with truth, that historians, geographers, and poets all speak of her as "the city with seven hills," and conclude that in their interpretation "there can be no mistake." And we see once again that "Rome" is a powerful *illustration*, and there would indeed seem little doubt that, as an *illustration*, she is before the Apostle's mind : verse 18 seems almost to settle this point. But she *fills up* the picture here no more than she has previously done. Notice, as most important, the reading in verse 10 of "they" for "there." Rome then seems to be before the seer's vision, as a *type* ; as she sits upon the seven mountains, which add immense strength to her literal position, so the great world-power which helps and "carries"

degenerate Christianity is supported in its turn by its sevenfold component parts,—its mountains, which are stated to be “seven kings,” all uniting to strengthen it, either in the form of opposition to the true God, or subsequently, in that of a degenerate, apostate, and world-conformed Christianity. The metaphor of “mountains” is used in the Old Testament to signify the strength and solidity of power (see Isa. ii. 2 ; Dan. ii. 35 ; Zech. iv. 7). Thus each mountain, *i.e.* each head, represents a king or a kingdom opposed to the Lord and to His Christ. They are not necessarily limited to *seven*, that number only setting forth the completeness of their unity and aim, just as the “seven” Churches represent the “Church Catholic.” At the time of the writing of the Apocalypse “five are fallen.” These are, I think, not emperors, but kingdoms. There is a great consensus of opinion towards Egypt, Nineveh, Babylon, Persia, Greece. (Note in connection with these names Ezek. xxix. 12 ; Nahum iii., under the same terrible similitude ; Isa. xxi. 9 ; Dan. x. 13 to xi. 4.) If we are correct in this, Rome is the one that “*is*”; the other, which was then “not yet come,” being variously interpreted according to the bias of the writers. It must needs, by God’s decree, when it comes, continue “a little while,” emphasizing again the need of patience. This, rather than its continuance, is the chief thought. “A little while” occupies in the Greek a peculiar position which enforces this. Here is yet again, then, another instance of the merciful shortening of the days of trial for the elect’s sake. “Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” Another passage much in my mind throughout this Instruction is, “Then shall that ‘wicked’ be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.” “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

INSTRUCTION XLII.

CHAPTER xvii. 11 TO END.

11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

12 And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet: but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them:

*For he is Lord of Lords, and King of kings, and they that are with him, are called, and chosen, and faithful.

15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate, and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

18 And the woman which thou sawest, is that great City which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

11 And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven; and he goeth into perdition. And the

12 ten horns that thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but they receive authority as

13 kings, with the beast, for one hour. These have one mind, and they give their power and authority unto the beast.

14 These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they also shall overcome that are with him, called and

15 chosen and faithful. And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and

16 tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast, these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her utterly

17 with fire. For God did put in their hearts to do his mind, and to come to one mind, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God should be accomplished. And the woman

18 whom thou sawest is the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

* 1 Tim.
6. 15.
ch. 19.
16.

¹ Gr.
hath a
king-
dom.

It is clear that "the beast" here mentioned is the one already alluded to in verse 8. He "*was*;" at the time of St. John's writing he "*is not*;" a time was then to come when he should live again, receiving from the ten kings for a *brief* period, "one hour," their power and strength, and then going into perdition. As every word is important, notice that in the Revised Version it is not *the* eighth (*i.e.* not one of the seven restored, and, clearly, not one of the seven heads, which were only a part of himself), but *an* eighth; and it would seem best to look upon him as an outcome of the seven, thus indicating a state of things (existing for a short time), as the result of the union between the God-opposing world-power, and degenerate Christianity. It is antichrist, in some shape or form, *apparently* triumphing; he does not, however, rise and fall like the seven, but *is destroyed by the Lord Himself*. We are clearly to expect during this period a concentration and amalgamation of all the malice and evil which have preceded. The question of a *personal* antichrist is one which has been widely discussed, and no doubt in every age of opposition to God some leader will be conspicuous; but the passage seems to me to lose force if we thus personalize it, for the great and important fact to be remembered is that before the Lord's coming there is to be a widespread development of the antichristian world-power, and that in a form necessarily worse than ever, because it is concentrated.

We next proceed to the consideration of the "ten horns." In the twelfth chapter we understood the seven heads to be antichristian powers (seven being the Christian number), and the ten horns (ten being a world number) to be the worldly instruments of cruelty and force, which the red dragon employs. "Ten" is, I imagine, figurative, and not literal, and, as I read it, the seventh head being, from St. John's point of view, "yet to come," these horns are to be seen growing out of the seventh head, and they represent the subsequent world-powers federated in opposition to Christ, and helping on the beast, who had not, from St. John's point of view, received any kingdom as yet. The ten horns are, then, the kingdoms of the earth, the different State powers and State systems, allied against the Church and against Christ. Illustrations are close at hand, notably in France and Italy; plainly also in our own country in

the constant harassing of the Church, in the crippled powers of Convocation, and in the demand made by so many for a system of education which shall be wholly secular. I am no advocate for disestablishment or disendowment. I believe the latter would be a gigantic wrong, a monstrous national breach of the eighth commandment; and I believe that the former would entail fearful loss upon the guilty State itself; but I am bound to say that there would be much to welcome in the former if it meant that the Church would be free once more to legislate for herself in spiritual things, instead of being at the mercy, as she literally now is, of the votes of Jews, heathens, and infidels, to say nothing of Nonconformist politicians, who, to their shame be it said, almost unitedly cast in their suffrages not only against her, but against her efforts for better self-government. If it meant the restoration of synods, with a fair and systematic representation of the laity, and perhaps (though the patronage both of Crown and State is now most faithfully exercised) a somewhat more popular mode of appointment of some of her officers, there would at least be, in spite of all the consequent harm done to the State, some compensating blessing. One thing seems clear, not in England only, but abroad also, that the danger indicated here, of a separation between Church and State, and the drifting away of the State from Christ and Christianity—in other words, the growth of the power of antichrist—is no imaginary one. Our great comfort is that this antichristian power is to be of short duration, the reason being that the Lamb, and “they that are with Him, called, and chosen, and faithful,” shall overcome them. Some look upon the expression, “receive authority as kings, with the beast, for one hour,” as setting forth a contemporary reign, coming into existence with the beast, and with him going into perdition; but it seems much more likely that the expression is allied to “a short space,” in verse 10. It is used in this sense in St. Matt. xxvi. 40, and in Gal. ii. 5. Compare with interest ch. xii. 12, and contrast the reign of the Lord Himself (ch. xi. 15) and the reign of His Church (ch. xxii. 5).

In the unity of mind and sentiment recorded in verse 13 we are led back to verse 7, and thus notice a threefold union of the “beast,” the kings, *and* the harlot, whom the beast carries. This is the saddest feature of the whole picture.

The world-powers by themselves could do but little without the help of an unfaithful Christianity. It is by their union with him, and by the gift of their power and strength to him, that the antichristian beast becomes a triune power, and *a king of kings and a lord of lords*, thus affording another blasphemous imitation of the true King of kings and Lord of lords, the Lamb. All this helps to heighten the interest in the conflict, and to make the whole account intensely graphic. In ch. xi. 7, victory over the two witnesses seemed to lie with the beast that rose out of the abyss; here "the Lamb" gains it, and His "*called, and chosen, and faithful*" gain it too. The words italicized in the Revised Version give this right sense to the passage, which is thus beautifully parallel to the former part of ch. xii. 11, and should, for our comfort, be read with all the promises made "*to him that overcometh*" in chs. ii. and iii. I would press home the thought that part of the faithfulness is the "*watching with Christ for the one hour*" during which the unholy alliance of verse 12 is in progress. "*What! could ye not watch with Me one hour?*" The qualities of the victorious followers would seem to be progressive—"called, and chosen, and faithful." Every one baptized into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is called; but "*many are called, and few chosen,*" and the called and the chosen must remain faithful.

We have already noticed the signification of the next passage; it represents the far-spread and world-wide influence of the "harlot." But the picture leads us with joy to that which it travesties: "The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever. The Lord will give strength unto His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace." There is another parody, viz. on the great multitude of the redeemed, out of "*every nation, and of all tribes, and peoples, and tongues.*" The picture is appropriate to "Babylon," as the confusion of tongues commenced at Babel. A parallel passage in the symbolism will be found in Isa. viii. 7.

Then the commencement is seen of the breaking-up of the unholy alliance. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." "Upon the beast" is, in the Revised Version, "*and the beast.*" It is unnecessary to go into details here, as the eighteenth chapter is itself a

detailed account of that which is here set forth in brief ; it will suffice to say that the picture is one of absolute destruction. A passage like Ezek. xxiii. 22 is too striking a parallel to be passed over. Notice the same metaphor of the "harlot" set forth in terrible language : "Therefore, O Aholibah, thus saith the Lord God : Behold, I will raise up thy lovers against thee, from whom thy mind is alienated, and I will bring them against thee on every side." So do the "beast" and "the horns" he return against the harlot. The Book of Leviticus, too, shows us that burning with fire was the awful punishment pronounced upon some of the worst kinds of unchastity. The whole Scripture is written for our learning and encouragement, as well as for our warning. The treacherous compact between the world and degenerate Christianity will not last long, and an early result will be the quarrelling of the guilty conspirators amongst themselves, God Himself overruling all to the advancement of His glory and the good of His Church. Rome is, as we have seen, clearly before the seer's mind as an *illustration* ; she was the *then* concentration of the godless power ; and the remarkable way in which the Pope has practically become a prisoner in the Vatican, terribly crippled in his temporal power, might well excuse those who see the whole prophecy fulfilled in her now. Rome, however, in St. John's day was pagan, and, as the late Dean Vaughan points out, to promise the Church under Domitian deliverance from the yoke of the papacy would have been to mock, and not to console. If his prophetic eye could see her in papal form, it could also have looked beyond her and seen many another picture of spiritual unfaithfulness, while, looking back, it could see, as another example, Jerusalem itself a guilty city. "They shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation." Jerusalem is, throughout the Bible, a terrible type of spiritual fornication ; it was there that Jew and Roman conspired together, in apparently successful, yet vain effort, against the Lamb, and against His Church ; there that the guilty conspiracy between them was broken up ; there that the Romans, the old allies of the Jews in their deadly sin, came to destroy the inhabitants and burn up the city ; it was the beautiful buildings of "the Holy City" that were seen crackling in the flames, as the Roman banners hovered, eagle-like, over their ill-fated quarry.

Wherever, throughout all time, kindred conspiracies arise, similar results will follow. I feel that we shall lose an immense amount of comfort, help, and encouragement, unless we press home this teaching as applicable to *all time*. We have seen it to be capable of many illustrations, but I do not think it can be satisfied by any one city, and certainly not by the merely literal destruction of its buildings. That which is set forth is the *principle* on which God acts; we are one day to see it carried out in its final form, one day to see the Lamb overcoming all evil, and them also overcoming who are with Him, "called, and chosen, and faithful."

"Brothers, this Lord Jesus
Shall return again,
With His Father's glory,
With His Angel train;
For all wreaths of empire
Meet upon His Brow,
And our hearts confess Him
King of glory now."

(Hymns A. & M., 306.)

INSTRUCTION XLIII.

CHAPTER xviii.

18 And after these things, I saw another Angel come down from heaven, having great power, and the earth was lightened with his glory.

* ch. 14.
8.

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, *Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird :

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the Kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the Merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the ||abundance of her delicacies.

|| Or,
power.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues :

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works : in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double.

7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her : for she saith in her heart, I sit a *Queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

* Is. 47.
8.

18 After these things I saw another angel coming down out of heaven, having great authority ; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

2 And he cried with a mighty voice, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and is become a habitation of ¹devils, and a ²hold of every unclean spirit, and a ²hold of every unclean and

3 hateful bird. For ³by ⁴the wine of the wrath of her fornication all the nations are fallen ; and the kings of the earth committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth waxed rich by the power of her ⁵wantonness.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her

5 plagues : for her sins ⁶have reached even unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

6 Render unto her even as she rendered, and double *unto her* the double according to her works : in the cup which she mingled, mingle unto

7 her double. How much soever she glorified herself, and waxed ⁷wanton, so much give her of torment and mourning : for she saith in her heart, I

¹ Gr.
demons.

² Or,
prison.

³ Some authorities read *of the wine . . . have drunk.*

⁴ Some ancient authorities omit *the wine of.*

⁵ Or,
luxury.

⁶ Or,
clave together.

⁷ Or,
luxurious.

8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burnt with fire, for strong is the Lord God, who judgeth her.

9 And the Kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning:

10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city: for in one hour is thy judgment come.

11 And the Merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their merchandise any more.

12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all ||Thyine wood, and all manner vessels of Ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

13 And Cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and ||slaves, and souls of men.

14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after, are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty, and goodly, are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

15 The Merchants of these things which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall in no wise see mourning.

8 Therefore in one day shall her plagues come, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is ¹the Lord God which

9 judged her. And the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and lived ²wantonly with her, shall weep and wail over her, when they look upon the smoke of her

10 burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! for in one hour is thy judgement come.

11 And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their ³merchan-

12 dise any more; ³merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stone, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet; and all thyine wood, and every vessel of ivory, and every vessel made of most precious wood, and of brass, and

13 iron, and marble; and cinnamon, and ⁴spice, and incense, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and cattle, and sheep; and *merchandise* of horses and chariots and ⁵slaves;

14 and ⁶souls of men. And the fruits which thy soul lusted after are gone from thee, and all things that were dainty and sumptuous are perished from thee, and *men* shall find them no more at all.

15 The merchants of these things, who were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *the Lord*.

² Or, *luxuriously*.

³ Gr. *cargo*.

⁴ Gr. *aromaticum*.

⁵ Gr. *bodies*.

⁶ Or, *lives*.

|| Or, *sweet*.

|| Or, *bodies*.

16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls :

17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailers, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city ?

19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping, and wailing, saying, Alas alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea, by reason of her costliness, for in one hour is she made desolate.

20 Rejoice over her thou heaven, and ye holy Apostles and Prophets, for God hath avenged you on her.

21 And a mighty Angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

22 And the voice of harpers and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee : and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee : and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee :

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee : and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee : for thy Merchants were the great

her torment, weeping and mourning ; saying, Woe, woe, the great city, she that was arrayed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and ¹ decked with gold and precious stone

17 and pearl ! for in one hour so great riches is made desolate. And every shipmaster, and every one that saileth any whither, and mariners, and as many as ² gain their living by sea, stood afar off, and cried out as they looked upon the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like the great city ? And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, wherein were made rich all that had their ships in the sea by reason of her costliness ! for in one hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets ; for God hath judged your judgement on her.

21 And ³ a strong angel took up a stone as it were a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with a mighty fall shall Babylon, the great city, be cast down, and shall be found no more at all.

22 And the voice of harpers and minstrels and flute-players and trumpeters shall be heard no more at all in thee ; and no craftsman, ⁴ of whatsoever craft, shall be found any more at all in thee ; and the voice of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee ; and the light of a lamp shall shine no more at all in thee ; and the voice of the bridegroom and of

¹ Gr. gilded.

² Gr. work the sea.

³ Gr. one.

⁴ Some ancient authorities omit of whatsoever craft.

men of the earth : for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

24 And in her was found the blood of Prophets, and of Saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee : for thy merchants were the princes of the earth ; for with thy sorcery were all the nations deceived.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth.

WE have in this chapter the detailed account of the destruction of Babylon, as indicated in v. 16 of the previous chapter. We have so frequently dealt with it, and its figurative meaning, that I propose to take the chapter as a whole, and not to criticise it line by line, and word by word.

The chapter is clearly divided into sections, each commencing with the vision of an angel or a voice from heaven :—

(1) Vs. 1-4, another announcement of Babylon's fall.

(2) 4-21, the minute details of her fall.

(3) The completeness of her fall set forth in the rest of the chapter by a significant action on the part of the angel.

Section (2) is rendered more interesting by the fact that three different classes are seen bemoaning Babylon's fate.

(1) "The kings of the earth," the very ones who have joined with her in her sin, mourn over the fate of the degenerate Christianity, which has pandered to the world, its ways, and its maxims.

(2) "The merchants of the earth." "Of the earth" is probably figurative, implying, as before, the ungodly worldlings. Here they are men who have bowed the knee to mammon, to the greed of money for money's sake, encouraged by the "harlot." Many naturally try to make out a strong case for papal Rome, looking upon the merchandise as that of spiritual things, and pointing out that all the items are to be found in the Roman ceremonial. We are reminded that Pliny says there was a mania in Rome, at a certain time, for tables made of thyine wood. The other items of the merchandise do not seem to need particular remark until we come to verse 13, where it is urged by those who see Rome only in the picture, that the traffic in the souls of men refers to the

Masses for the souls of the departed, which have for a long time brought in a great revenue to that church. The word, however, which is translated "slaves" is "bodies," and "souls" is equivalent to "lives," so that probably the "bodies" refer to the men who bare burdens, and the "souls" are the men themselves as slaves.

(3) All who "trade by sea." The Rome-only theorists note that an immense amount of wealth was brought to that city, and to the seamen, by the number of pilgrims who flocked to it. If any difficulty arises on the point "How could the ruin of a faithless Christianity affect such as these?" it may be met by Professor Milligan's words, "Nothing has contributed more to deepen and strengthen the worldliness of the world, than the faithlessness of those who ought to testify that the true inheritance of man is beyond the grave, and that the duty of all is to seek 'a better country, that is a heavenly.' A mere worldly and utilitarian system of ethics may be more trusted to correct the evils of a growing luxuriousness, than a system which teaches that we may serve both God *and* mammon."

It will be well now to look at Ezek. xxvi. and xxvii., where the "burden of Tyre" is set forth in language so strikingly akin to this, that it is difficult to avoid the conviction that it is in the Apostle's mind. Now, Tyre was clearly, in Ezekiel's time, the "*then*" illustration of the same sin. She is also called, in Isa. xxiv. 10, "The city of confusion," *i.e.* the city of "Babel." This seems to tell strongly for the point we are maintaining, that *not Rome only*, but every unfaithful Church, or any body of unfaithful Christians, is indicated, as is their surely following fate. All who lean on the world, and follow its lusts, all who compromise faithful witness for Christ by word and life; all who accept the world's standard instead of that of Christ and His Church, are included in the picture. Another point which helps our argument is that Rome has never been a great commercial city, and its natural geographical position does not seem to point to its ever becoming so. Dean Alford, while strongly of opinion that papal Rome is meant, candidly acknowledges this, and says that, "The details of this mercantile lamentation far more nearly suit London than Rome at any assignable period of her history." Yet again, the last verse in the

chapter is, as we have previously noticed, another strong argument in our favour. I am only repeating what I have said previously when I say that not even the most intolerant ultra-protestant would lay at Rome's door "the blood of prophets and of saints, and of *all* that have been slain upon the earth." I have no doubt, in my own mind, of the parallel with St. Matt. xxiii. 35. So that we seem to be on safe ground when we say that, with all the particular illustrations, the *great point* to be remembered is that *any* departure from God under the Old Testament dispensation, or any national yielding (the individual lesson is equally strong) to degenerate Christianity in the New, brings about its own destruction, involving in its ruin the worldly city that has fostered it, and been the guilty partner of its spiritual unfaithfulness.

It will be well now to retrace our steps for a while, and to notice one or two passages :—

(1) Another parallel with the discourse on the four last things, in verse 4. The parallel is St. Matt. xxiv. 16. The same kind of warning occurs in the history of Lot, and in that of the sin of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

(2) Notice that no less than five of the references are from Jer. li. Compare verse 6 of that chapter with verse 4 here ; verse 9 with verse 5 ; verse 37 with verse 2 ; verse 45 with verse 4 ; and vs. 63 and 64 with verse 21. Moreover the same retribution in kind, which is to be noticed there (verse 49), follows on here in verse 6. The "rendering double" was the rule under the law (see Exod. xxii. 4, 7, 9). The corresponding blessing is in Isa. lxi. 7. Verse 7, again, is strikingly parallel with Isa. xlvii. 7-10 ; while Isa. liv. 5, "Thy Maker is thy Husband," throws light on her blasphemous boast that she is "no widow." Christ is the heavenly Bridegroom whom she has deserted for unholy lovers ; she has been espoused to Him, and has proved faithless ; hence she appears before us under the worst form of that sin which typifies spiritual unfaithfulness. This prepares us for the passage which concludes the chapter (vs. 20-24). Notice in verse 20 the Revised Version reading for "avenged" is "judged your judgment." As with the contrite sinner receiving God's absolution at the mouth of His accredited messenger, so the holy apostles and prophets find their judgment on the "harlot" endorsed by God Himself. "Whose soever sins

ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." With the symbolic action which follows, her ruin and desolation are seen to be complete. If we are able humbly to say, "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord," rejoicing not over the sorrows of the guilty sufferers, but over the triumph of God and of right, let us learn our own lesson :—

We have before us in the Apocalypse three women : the first of these, in ch. xii., is the Old Testament Church. The second here, under the figure of the harlot, is not *the* Church, but *any so-called* Church which has strayed from the truth. Thirdly, the perfected Church, which is seen, later on, as the bride adorned for her husband. It will be noticed at once that she, too, is a city, the "New Jerusalem." This seems to be a powerful confirmation of the position we have taken up. The one city is the woman faithless, the harlot ; the other city is the woman remaining faithful, the bride ;—not Rome only, or Jerusalem only, but a revelation applicable to all time. On the one side are those who are represented by Babylon, who have a form of godliness, but deny its power ; those who prefer the world to Christ ; who compromise faithful witness for Christ by word and life in order to please men ; who would oust religion from school and college, and the deliberative assemblies of the nation ; who would even debase art, and music, and poetry ; who would make flesh their arm ; who persecute the Church, and, worst of all—for this is spiritual harlotry—do so under the plea, and in the name of, religion. On the other side are the faithful, those who are testifying for Christ, not by lip only, but by life ; those who, obliged to be in the world, are not of it ; those who are maintaining, without compromise and in spite of, all misunderstandings, the Catholic faith ; who are setting their faces like a flint against secularism in school or State, and who within, in the arena of their own hearts, are doing loyal battle for their King, against the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. These two pictures fill up the solemn revelation we have had before us, of Babylon and her contrast, far more fully than any individual Church does. If we go back once more to the discourse on the four last things, our conviction is still further strengthened. Much of that discourse applies primarily to Jerusalem, the chosen abode of God, so dear to the Saviour

that He weeps over her impending ruin, and yet the object of God's righteous judgment. She is faithless and about to be destroyed, and yet to be, through the few faithful in her, the mother of the Church of Christ, quickened into life by God the Holy Ghost, and energized by His endowments. So there are in Christianity to-day, on the one side the faithless, degenerate, and worldly; and on the other the faithful, regenerate, and being renewed, heavenly and spiritual. May God keep us, in our pure and apostolical branch of His Church Catholic, *faithful*, faithful come what may, faithful unto death, by His grace, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

INSTRUCTION XLIV.

CHAPTER XIX. 1-10.

19 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia: salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God:

2 For true and righteous are his judgments, for he hath judged the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

3 And again they said, Alleluia: and her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

4 And the four and twenty Elders, and the four beasts fell down, and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen, Alleluia.

5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of Saints.

19 After these things I heard as it were a great voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, Hallelujah; Salvation, and glory, and power,

2 belong to our God: for true and righteous are his judgements; for he hath judged the great harlot, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and he hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

3 And a second time they ¹say, Hallelujah. And her smoke goeth up ²for

4 ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God that sitteth on the throne, saying,

5 Amen; Hallelujah. And a voice came forth from the throne, saying, Give praise to our God, all ye his servants, ye that fear him, the small and the

6 great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Al-

7 mighty, reigneth. Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8 And it was given unto her that she should array

¹ Gr. have said.

² Gr. unto the ages of the ages.

* Matt. 22. 2.	9 And he saith unto me, Write, *Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.	herself in fine linen, bright <i>and</i> pure: for the fine linen is the righteous
* ch. 22. 9.	10 And I fell at his feet to worship him: And he said unto me, *See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren, that have the testimony of Jesus, Worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.	9 acts of the saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are true words of God. And I fell down before his feet to worship him. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

WE have already had five songs of praise at different stages of this wonderful book:—

(1) In ch. iv. that of the whole creation, including the ransomed Church.

(2) In ch. v. the song of praise to the Lamb, by whom the great work of re-union with God has been accomplished.

(3) In the interval between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals.

(4) After the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

(5) Just before the giving of the seven “vials” to the seven angels.

Here, too, we have another, when the penultimate stage is reached, and the Church’s triumph and rest are drawing near.

“Much people” is, literally, a great multitude, recalling us to ch. vii., and clearly indicating the “Catholic Church,” out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. It seems right to conclude that the Jews are to be looked upon as included in the number, as the cry “Alleluia” is distinctly Hebrew, “Praise ye Jah,” “Jah” being a shortened poetical form of Jehovah.

As before, we notice in the Greek the definite article before each subject of the ascription, “*the* salvation, and *the* glory, and *the* power, belong to our God;” they are here acknowledged in specific connection with His “true and righteous” judgments. The subject-matter of the rejoicing is—

(1) That Babylon's corruption and deception are over.

(2) And that thus the way is prepared for the marriage of the Lamb.

The repetition of the cry "Alleluia," the taking of it up by the twenty-four elders—the Christian Church of united Jew and Gentile,—and by the four living creatures—redeemed creation—as well as its repetition in *another* language (verse 5), by the Voice which came forth from the throne, make a magnificent *Te Deum*, sung antiphonally, with strophe and antistrophe, in which all take part, from the least to the greatest, and which we ourselves may hope to chant in glory. The "Voice" which "came forth from the throne" might well proceed from Him who sitteth upon the throne (see chs. iii. 21 ; v. 6 ; vi. 16 ; vii. 17), though it is objected to this view that Christ never speaks of God as "our God." The voice is immediately answered, for verse 6 is the response to it. Two points are well worth our attention :—

(1) Its description, as being not that of a great multitude only, but (a) "As the voice of many waters," in glorious comparison to the waters on which the harlot sat, which have been already explained in the book itself (xvii. 15), as "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." These, by the annihilation of the harlot, are won to Christ. (b) "As the voice of mighty thunders." As we have already noted, the Jews looked upon thunder as the sevenfold voice of God, so that it makes a magnificent picture, and a grand concert. "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord."

"Heaven and earth, and all creation,
Laud and magnify His Name!"

"Now from all men be outpoured
Alleluia to the Lord ;
With Alleluia evermore
The Son and Spirit we adore."

(2) We notice that the praise is for something yet grander and greater than God's judgment upon the harlot ; it is for the *reign of God*, His reign as a King—as the Greek emphasizes—and as the *All-mighty*, mighty over all sin, and over all opposition ; mighty for all righteousness, holiness, and purity.

Then follows that scene which the expectant eyes of the Saviour, and of all who in every age have loved and trusted Him, have looked forward to as the consummation

of their hopes; the scene which comforted The Lord's dying eyes upon the cross, and formed "the joy that was set before Him;" the scene portrayed with all the graphic power of Eastern imagery in the loves of Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Rachel, and told of with a poetry of which we can never tire, in Psa. xlv. It is the subject of many of our Saviour's parables, and of St. Paul's teaching: "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."¹

"From heaven He came and sought her
To be His holy Bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died."

Can we have a more powerful or beautiful contrast to the unhappy "harlot"?

The Bridegroom is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, not only Perfect God and Perfect Man, but perfect in humanity on humanity's behalf, humanity's perfect answer to the mind and will of God; the Bride is the perfected Church, the King's daughter, not arrayed with external trappings, as is the harlot, but "all glorious *within*." The harlot had the gorgeous array, but *she* is holy in thought and word, and deed and heart, Christ's righteousness her beautiful *habit*, in the double use of the word. Sanctification and justification are inseparable; the one cannot exist, in any true sense, without the other. "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption."² "Righteousness" and "sanctification," in this passage, should not be separated by a comma; they are linked together in beautiful union in the Greek. So too here, the thought is one of perfect union and participation. "Consider what is that glorious outside of the Church militant, which is not only the typical representation of her triumphant sister, but also the safeguard of her own internal graces; as it is written, 'Upon all the glory shall be a defence' (Isa. iv. 5). Call to mind all the beauty of her buildings made after the pattern of heavenly things—her marvellous cathedrals, her abbeys, her countless parish

¹ Eph. v. 25-27.

² 1 Cor. i. 30.

churches, her chapels, hallowing every corner of the earth, the peaks of desolate mountains, the recesses of woody valleys, imprinting her own holiness on bridges, and castles, and lonely sea rocks; then her music, which we may piously believe to be but the echo of the song of Moses and of the Lamb; further, her marvellous system of antiphons, transfiguring the psalms of the Jewish synagogue to her own celestial meaning; and, if we are to take the Vulgate translation, ‘surrounded about with a variety,’ there is nothing more glorious than the difference in oneness, and the unity in multiplicity, of the Liturgies, and Offices, and Hours, of the whole Catholic Church.”¹

The fine linen, bright and pure, is explained (probably by St. John himself, after his manner) to be not “the righteousness of the saints,” but “the righteous acts of the saints.” These outward proofs of the indwelling grace of God are given to her that *she may array herself therewith*. This leads on to that which seems to me to be a beautiful and helpful thought: the marriage of the Lamb is followed by the *marriage supper*, which furnishes us with another prospect. The *marriage* is the consummation of the hopes and happiness of the Church *collectively*; but the *marriage supper* is *individual*: “Blessed are they that are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” Every “righteous act” of the individual, every response, *i.e.* outwardly, to the movings of inward grace, is at once a part of the preparation of the Bride’s robe and of our own wedding garment; not imputed righteousness only, but imparted also; the one is our *title*, the other our *fitness*; the one is woven by Christ, the other we are engaged in weaving now, in dependence upon Christ’s Spirit; the one is complete, the other incomplete, but in process of completion: “She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework.” So Ayguan beautifully says, “The preparation which is to make us fit to appear before Our Lord is not the work of a moment, but is to be precept upon precept, line upon line, just as stitch after stitch makes up needlework.” The consideration of the relation of the millennium to the marriage of the Lamb is a subject which we must defer. It will suffice to say now that the present is but a preliminary picture; before the consummation much has yet

¹ Neale and Littledale, “Commentary on the Psalms:” Ps. xlv., vol. ii. p. 116.

to happen ; we shall view it in its fulness when we come to consider ch. xxi.

St. John is now assured by the angel that what has been revealed is God's truth, and that it will be fulfilled in due season. So impressed is he, that he is about to fall at his feet in humble homage ; but the heavenly messenger assures him that he and all they that *hold* the testimony of Jesus are fellow-servants, and that God alone is the rightful object of worship (comp. Acts x. 25, 26). The meaning of the words "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" seems clearly to be that all who are witnessing for Jesus, whether angels, or prophets, or saints, all who are holding fast the faith of Jesus, either in glory, or in the Church militant here in earth, are fellow-labourers being endowed with, and filled by, the same spirit (comp. Heb. xii. 1-3 ; 1 St. Pet. i. 10, 11). Some look on the passage as being, after St. John's manner, a parenthetical explanation of his own ; but it seems more natural to regard it as the language of the angel. So long as we are witnessing for Christ in word and life, we are one in the blessed Communion of Saints, with the whole company of the faithful, one in heart, one in life, one in love, one in hope, and one in praise, one in Christ before God, and one, Christ in us, before men, as Christ witnesses by us, and we witness for Christ. "I believe in the Communion of Saints."

This completes very beautifully the picture of the union between Jesus and His Church. The best witness for Him is that of a holy life, a life of righteous acts. Thus that which furnishes the Bride's garment pure and bright, bears witness at the same time for Jesus the Bridegroom ; the robe of the Church and her witness to Her Lord are one, just as the Lord Himself and His Church are one.

INSTRUCTION XLV.

CHAPTER xix. 11.

IT seems absolutely necessary, for any right appreciation of the passages which are to follow, that we should pause here, and examine the important question, Is the second coming of our blessed Lord to be *before* or *after* the millennial reign? I need hardly say that there are many theories as to the millennium, but it would be altogether outside the range and scope of these Instructions to attempt to examine anything like all of them. Four only will I incidentally mention here, purposing to deal with the main question later on.

(1) Some have supposed that the thousand years cover the whole history of the Christian Church from Christ's nativity to His second coming in glory; but surely none will be found to contend that Satan has been *bound* during this time!

(2) Others look upon the "thousand years" as only figuring completeness, the reign of the saints and Satan's bondage being both complete, and the letting loose of Satan for a little while signifying the whole of the Christian age. Chapter xx. 3 seems an insuperable objection to this view, of which, however, this much is probably correct, that the thousand years are not to be taken literally, but rather as figurative of a *definite* period of great length.

Then two other camps oppose each other, both united in one great and glorious hope of the second coming, but differing *toto cælo* as to their views connected with it:—

(3) The one maintaining that the millennium will arrive first, and be followed by the second coming of Christ, which will itself usher in at once the general resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment of the good and bad;

(4) The other bidding us look forward to the coming of our Lord first, to usher in the millennial reign.

Whichever view we take, we shall undoubtedly meet with difficulties; but to my mind *the last* seems to present

the fewest, to be more on the lines of the express statements of the Holy Book; and to open out to us all a most inspiring and blessed hope.

The following points seem to me to tell very strongly in its favour. Holy Scripture is, from beginning to end, a long continuous record of epiphanies and apostasies. There is no instance of a continued and maintained advance in righteousness consequent upon any revelation. The fall, the flood, the confusion of tongues, the Babylonish captivity, the rejection of the Messiah, and the destruction of Jerusalem, is each a conclusion of an epoch of revelation: this seems to justify the expectation of antichrist at the close of our own era. Have we then any ground for supposing that the earth is to be gradually prepared for the second coming until it shall have attained to a condition of righteousness, and that *then* the second coming will arrive? The teaching of Holy Scripture seems to be just in the opposite direction. Lawlessness, unbelief, and perilous times are there clearly revealed as the assured precursors of The King. Here, indeed, is another addition to our already long list of parallels with the "last things." "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man: they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark; and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be when the Son of man is *revealed*."¹ "Lawlessness" is no longer to remain as a *mystery*, but is to be *revealed* in "that wicked" (2 Thess. ii. 7, 8), whom, we are clearly taught, the Lord shall destroy with the "brightness of His coming," *i.e.* His "presence." Our Lord, moreover, traces for us the whole order and course of the Divine arrangement; the times of the Gentiles have to be fulfilled, during which Jerusalem is to be trodden down of them; and then "*immediately after the tribulation of those days,*"² *not after the lapse of a long period*, the "sign of the Son of man shall appear in heaven, . . . and then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with power and great glory."

¹ St. Luke xvii. 26-30.

² St. Matt. xxiv. 29.

Again, when our Lord's disciples thought that the kingdom of God should *immediately* appear, their error was corrected by our Lord, who speaks to them the parable of a certain nobleman, who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. The nobleman is Christ; the far country is His heavenly abode, where He "receives the kingdom" (Dan. vii. 13, 14). Not till His return will the kingdom of God appear. Moreover, *then* will He reward those who, during His absence, have been faithful. Now this is all clearly on the lines of that which is revealed in these closing chapters. But we are helped to this view even more convincingly, and most interestingly, by the revelation of the *two* resurrections. We are clearly and distinctly told that there is to be a *first* resurrection, in which He that hath part is "blessed and holy," and that the remainder of the dead are not to live again until the thousand years are finished. In spite of all that has been urged to the contrary, I believe that the parallel is to be found in St. John v. 21-30. It is true that we have there (1) a spiritual rising with Christ, and (2) the literal resurrection; but it will be clear that the spiritual rising cannot *exclude* the literal one, and thus the parallel is correct in this way: in the case before us the former resurrection is the literal resurrection of those who have previously risen with Christ; who, having passed potentially and spiritually from death unto life, have now the actual bestowal and full realization of the promise. Christ's verdict is given to them, and so they do not "come into judgment." Those who know Greek will appreciate the distinction between *κρίμα* and *κρίσις*, with which we shall deal more fully later on. The second resurrection is the final and general one, in which "all that are in the graves hear His voice, and come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have practised¹ evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." There are then two literal resurrections; the former of these is "the resurrection of the just;" of all who have been counted worthy to attain to it; of the "called, and chosen, and faithful." These shall share with Christ His reign, which will, in its full and perfect sense, then begin. This valuable point will be further strengthened by dwelling upon St. Paul's well-known aspiration, "If by any means I might attain to the

¹ St. John v. 29 (R.V. and margin).

resurrection of the dead." There are two expressions in the Greek, one with the preposition "out of," and the other followed by the genitive case, the latter meaning literally "resurrection of the dead," and the former "resurrection out from among the dead." St. Paul could have had no possible doubt of his resurrection at some time; that is the common lot of all; but that about which he was supremely anxious was the attaining to the former, the "resurrection out from among the dead," the *first resurrection*; it is the "prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."¹

I feel, then, on very safe ground in setting before you this teaching. There will be a "first resurrection," not that of the literal martyrs only, but of all who have borne faithful *witness* to their Lord, all who have been faithful in life, and faithful unto death; "if we endure, we shall also reign with Him."² This will be preceded by a time when "iniquity will abound and the love of many wax cold," when opposition to Christ will take very definite shape, the darkness deepening just before the dawn; immediately after this resurrection, the faithful who are alive upon the earth at the time of the coming will be "caught up to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. iv. 17). Then the millennial reign will begin; Satan will cease to be the ruling "prince of this world;" at the close of this period he will be let loose, but only "for a little time," to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the "final" war, and to *afford*, as I read it, a *last and necessary* TEST, for the second resurrection. Then *all evil is for ever destroyed in the lake of fire*.

This seems to me to fit in exactly with the nature of things. Surely we must hope that many will be ultimately saved who will not have a share in the first resurrection. Let us imagine an *extreme* case. Here, on the one side, is a saint of God, who, from his youth upwards, has served Him faithfully, and lived for Him and His glory. Here, on the other hand, is a man who has lived an idle, godless, careless and dissolute life; having broken every commandment, both in letter and in spirit, he is now in prison, waiting for the carrying out of the capital sentence for breach of the sixth commandment. *True* repentance might

¹ Phil. iii. 7-15. See also St. Luke xx. 35, as affording another most interesting parallel.

² 2 Tim. ii. 12 (R.V.).

seem to us, in such a case, to be impossible; "with God all things are possible." Supposing this man does *truly* repent, no one would dream of denying to him the *salvation* which Christ has obtained for the *worst*, "able," as He is, "to save them to the *uttermost*, who come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." That man then leaves the world with his ultimate salvation secured to him by Christ. But will any one pretend that, though both owe their salvation to Christ, and Christ alone, this man stands on the same level as the saint who has all his life served God with faithfulness? The one is ready to reign with Christ; the other has to unlearn his past, and to learn anew of the things of Christ. If once we can admit this, everything will, I think, fall into its proper place and shape. Between the two extremes there are, of course, innumerable gradations, and God alone is the judge of fitness or unfitness for sharing in the blessings of the "first resurrection."

May I, without being termed a heretic, be allowed to give shape to another thought? I would not, for a moment, encourage the mad idea that, "whatever a man does in this world, it does not much matter, for it will all be put right in the next." But neither would I limit God's mercy, or commit the sin of keeping silence if I think I see a glimmer of hope where hitherto, to so many, hope itself has seemed hopeless. How few there are who have not some redeeming quality in their character! Some remnant of the light which "lighteth every man, coming into the world"! How many there are, who, by the *power and love of the very Christ whom they acknowledge not*, are living, though professedly without Christ, without His Church, and without His sacraments, lives which put to shame those of many avowed believers! They are upright in conduct, true and just in their dealing, despising that which is low, and immoral, and unclean; they are kind, and generous, and charitable; even *we* hesitate to condemn such to the fires of *eternal hell*, if such fires are not useful and remedial; is there absolutely *no hope* that *The Father, Our Father*, who can never destroy anything that is good, will give to such another opportunity of seeing and acknowledging Christ, while He still reserves the greater blessing for those who "have not seen, and yet have believed"? They cannot, plainly, have their share in the *first* resurrection; is there

positively no hope for the second? "Severed from Me ye can do nothing." Are they of necessity *absolutely, eternally, hopelessly* severed? "Christ the firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ's *at His coming*; then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have *abolished* all rule, and all authority, and power, for He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet." This is God's order; but unless we admit some such hope as that which I have suggested, when is this grand and glorious assurance fulfilled? Does it not otherwise seem clear that Satan will get the best of the struggle in the sense of winning many more than Christ has won? Can Christ be said to have *put all enemies under His feet* in a way *satisfactory to omnipotent love*, if millions and billions of souls are left, at the last, bound in their eternal prison, ruled over by Satan, and raging against God? It is idle to quote an isolated passage like Eccles. xi. 3. That passage has *nothing to do with the state of souls in the eternal world*: no soul is to lie like a log all through the days of eternity. A far more appropriate passage is that which forms yet another parallel in the discourse upon the "last things"—the parable of the ten virgins. Notice that the foolish virgins have much in common with the wise. They have regard for the Bridegroom; they expect His coming, and join company with those who wait for Him; their vessels are right vessels; if they "slumber and sleep," so do the wise; and therefore it is not necessarily sinful slumber, or sloth. The *great and essential* difference is, that, like those whom I have described, they "have no oil in their vessels with their lamps." In other words, they are making the best of themselves, independent of Divine grace. When the time comes they are, therefore, unprepared, under the one metaphor for the marriage feast, and, under the other, for the glories of the first resurrection. *That door is shut*, but it is not, as I would humbly hope and believe, *necessarily* the door of their *ultimate* salvation. If it be objected that this involves belief in purgatory, then I must confess to my belief, not in "the Romish doctrine concerning purgatory," with its attendant abominations, but in a time of purging, of progress, and development, under God's hand, teaching and discipline, by whatever means He sees fit to use.

INSTRUCTION XLVI.

CHAPTER XIX. 11 TO XX. 3.

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called faithful and true, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns, and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself.

13 * And he was clothed with a vesture dipt in blood, and his name is called, The word of God.

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on his vesture, and on his thigh a name written, * *KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*

17 And I saw an Angel standing in the Sun, and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God:

18 That ye may eat the flesh of Kings, and the flesh of Captains, and the flesh of

11 And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon, ¹called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 And his eyes *are* a flame of fire, and upon his head *are* many diadems; and he hath a name written, which no one knoweth but he himself.

13 And he *is* arrayed in a garment ²sprinkled with blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen,

15 white *and* pure. And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the ³winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on his garment and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

17 And I saw ⁴an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in mid heaven, Come *and* be gathered together unto the great supper of God;

18 that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of ⁵captains, and the flesh

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *called.*

² Some ancient authorities read *dipped in.*

³ Gr. *winepress of the wine of the fierceness.*

⁴ Gr. *one.*

⁵ Or, *military tribunes* Gr. *chiliarchs.*

* 1s. 63.
2.

* ch. 17.
14.

mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men both free and bond, both small and great.

19 And I saw the beast, and the Kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet, that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

20 And I saw an Angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand.

2 And he laid hold on the dragon that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, and small and great.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image: they twain were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with

21 brimstone: and the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, *even the sword* which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

20 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great

2 chain ¹in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years,

3 and cast him into the abyss, and shut *it*, and sealed *it* over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time.

¹ Gr.
upon.

LEAVING now the further consideration of the millennial reign till our next Instruction, we are ready to proceed with that which is immediately before us. It is the special introduction to the advent of Our Blessed Lord. That it is

He that is spoken of there can be little doubt, for not only is the description of Him very similar to that in ch. i., but His Name is given, "*The Word of God*" (see St. John i. 1). We have in the description much that has been touched upon before, and into which, therefore, we need not go in detail; we should, however, notice that features previously isolated are here combined. The "white horse" is that on which we have already seen Christ going forth "conquering and to conquer." The war in heaven has ended in His glorious triumph, and now heaven is opened for the advent of Him who is "King of kings, and Lord of lords." All the declarations of Holy Scripture seem to fall beautifully into their place with this explanation, for the "armies which are in heaven follow Him." "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." Two other points in this section alone seem to need special notice.

(1) That the names written are two—one, probably, on the forehead, which *He alone* knew, the *great High-Priestly Name*; the other on His vesture and on His thigh, the "vesture" being the glory of His divinity, and the "thigh" the humility of His humanity; the name being on the thigh seems to seal the hopes of the world. The hand put under the thigh (see Gen. xxiv. 2, and xlvii. 29) was the patriarchal form of oath, recognizing the national hope; here it is seen fulfilled, in every way, in Christ.

(2) The "vesture dipped in blood": the reference is clearly to Isa. lxiii. 2, 3. It is not, therefore, His own precious blood, but that of His enemies. This strengthens our decision that the reference is to His *second* coming; in the first coming He laid the foundation of His kingdom, by suffering and dying; now He is bringing His regal sway to a glorious issue.

If this picture, and that which follows, should appear to us, at first sight, to include horrible details, which may seem inconsistent with the love of God, it will be a help to us to remember that that which is being destroyed is *sin*, the hateful cause of all our misery and ruin, which we, if we are on Christ's side, desire with all our hearts should be destroyed, root and branch. No words can be too strong, no scene of judgment too terrible, no details too tragic, no

process of extermination too thorough; with our whole soul we say, "Thy kingdom come: Amen."

St. John next sees an angel—one angel—"standing in the sun;" *i.e.* he is in the great centre, the midst of heaven, in which the fowls that he summons are pictured as flying. The passage is plainly allied with that of Ezek. xxxix. 17, etc., in which also the judgment upon Gog and Magog is introduced. The parallel in the discourse upon the four last things is St. Matt. xxiv. 28. The birds are the agents of God's righteous retribution. In this instance, however, they are not eagles, but vultures, which not only fly high in heaven, "plying their oary wings across the sky,"¹ but whose dreadful office follows beneficially upon the scene of a great carnage. The *supper of the Great God* is in obvious contrast with the *supper of the Lamb*. The enemies are then specified, divided into two bodies of the world-number "four." Here we have an instance of the extreme care exercised by the translators of the Revised Version. They have omitted the comma in verse 18, between the "flesh of horses," and "them that sit on them," thus including them in one, and making in both cases four in all (1) kings, chiliarchs, mighty men, horsemen, all *actively* engaged in war. (2) Those not actually warring, though on their side, free, bond, small, great. "Flesh," in the plural in the Greek, is mentioned five times, presumably to show the carnality of the beast's followers; and thus we have "the world, the flesh, and the devil" again before us as the great enemies of Christ and His Church. Auberlen says that the world, in its opposition to God, even when it has reached the highest development of its material and spiritual power, is, after all, only a "decorated carcase."

Then, as we read the next passage, notice the *united army* of Christ, and the *armies* of His opponents; we have no *fresh* gathering together of the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, but that which has already been described in ch. xvi. 16, etc. It is rather the *result* that is seen, in the capture of the beast. The false prophet who is taken with him is identical with the "second beast" of ch. xiii. 11, the correct translation being "with him the false prophet who wrought *the* signs in his sight." The representatives of most of that which is antichrist, now meet with their due reward of destruction; whatever

¹ See Æschylus, "Agamemnon" (Anstice's translation).

shape the opposition takes, whether of worldliness or false teaching, it is to be cast, in the person of its great representatives, into *the* lake of fire that "burneth with brimstone." Into the *same* lake Satan is cast, later on, after his final futile attempt against God.

It is patent that we cannot go into the whole eschatological question here. Is it not enough for us to believe, as Bishop Warburton puts it, that "the sense of the whole seems to be that, at the final consummation of all things, all evil, physical and moral, will be abolished"? If we imagine evil as a person, there is no difficulty in the statement "they twain were cast *alive* into the lake." It may even perhaps simply mean, "as Christ finds them." What is *all-important* is to note that this is the fate of the beast and the false prophet; "the *rest*," i.e. evidently the rest of those mentioned in verse 19, were slain with the sword; and all that we can *positively* predicate of them is that they had no share in the first resurrection.

CHAPTER XX.

A revelation full of the greatest hope and joy now comes before us. We have already seen, in ch. ix. 1, that, under the fifth trumpet, an evil angel had the key of the abyss given to him. That key is, however, *held* by Christ. The evil angel *unlocked* the abyss, being permitted by God to let loose upon earth the terrible plagues of which we have read. Here that time is seen to have come to an end, except for the short after-space. The *good* angel from heaven, in his turn, *locks* the abyss, and with it, of course, all its plagues. He not only locks in, but chains him who, as before (ch. xii., etc.), is called "the Dragon," and "the old Serpent;" "the Devil," because he casts *stumbling-blocks* in our way; and "Satan," because he is our *adversary*. He made war, remember, against the witnesses (see ch. xi. 7), and overcame them, and killed them, and it is he who gave his power, seat, and great authority to the beast (ch. xiii. 2). Moreover, a seal is set upon him, in which some see a righteous retribution for the act of sealing the new tomb in which Our Lord was laid, just as the binding is for the binding of Christ. With the beast and the false prophet, cast into the lake of fire, and Satan locked and chained in the abyss, the reign of Christ with His people

for a long definite period, commences. The deception of the nations, Gog and Magog, does not here come within our purview. Satan has already (ch. xii. 9) been described as deceiving the whole of the inhabited earth, but the nations which he has deceived hitherto, he will deceive no longer. The King's sign-manual is upon the seal, and the key itself is in the hands of the victorious Christ.

I feel that all of us who enter into the joy of this revelation, will look forward to its fulfilment with more earnestness than ever, will work and prepare for it, and promote it in every way we can, and thus, as we humbly hope, be found among them that have loved His appearing. A passage of powerful parallel interest seems to me to sum up our thoughts better than any words of mine can: "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. *He that is not with Me is against Me*, and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth."¹ Oh! to dread, next to *active opposition* to Him—which is siding with antichrist—the being *not with Him*, not actively, earnestly, and definitely on His side; the merely passive, negative condition, which makes us an easy prey to the Evil One. Remember that he is not yet bound; therefore watch we, therefore pray we, not only, by the Grace of God, emptying our hearts of evil, but, by the same Grace, filling them with good. So shall we be found on the side of Christ when He comes, and this revelation shall be ours, not merely, as it is now, in faith, but in all the unspeakable joy of fruition and reality. Amen.

¹ St. Luke xi. 21-23.

INSTRUCTION XLVII.

CHAPTER XX. 4-6.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them : and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands ; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be Priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgement was given unto them : and *I saw* the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand ; and they lived, and reigned with Christ

5 a thousand years. The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resur-

6 rection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : over these the second death hath no ¹power ; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him ²a thousand years.

¹ Or, *authority*.

² Some ancient authorities read *the*.

I now, with the greatest diffidence, approach the further consideration of the millennial reign. We have seen that there is, at least, much hope that the next advent of Our Blessed Lord will *precede* and *not follow* it. The difficulty with many is that they cannot dissociate His coming from the great judgment which, in their opinion, is immediately to follow. But I venture to draw attention to the point that there are here clearly set forth *two judgments*, just as we have already noticed two resurrections, and to suggest, with all humility, the question whether St. Matt. xxv. 31-46 may not refer to *this judgment*, and

not to the final one? Some think that we have here the fulfilment of the promise, "In the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." And though this promise may, at first sight, seem reasonably to be limited in its application to the Apostles only, it is apparently extended to the whole company of the faithful—in other words, to the partakers of the *first* resurrection. "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" But I myself think that we have an exact parallel with St. John v. 22–24: "Neither doth the Father judge any man, but He hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father Which sent Him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and *cometh not into judgment*, but hath passed out of death into life." This is emphasized by the all-important fact that the word used in the passage we are considering is *κρίμα*, not *κρίσις*; *κρίμα* is "given unto them," that is, the *result* of the judging rather than the *act* thereof; it is, as we should say, the *decision* or *verdict*. The judgment, therefore, affects themselves more than others, and the *result* is given to them, "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And they live and reign with Christ a thousand years; they do not come into *κρίσις*, but in continuation of the Christ-life once given to them, they pass absolutely from death unto life. It will, possibly, be by some objected at once that at the end of the scene so graphically depicted in St. Matt. xxv. 31–46, the fate of the righteous and the wicked is permanently sealed. But if we translate verse 46 fairly, it is a strong argument in our favour rather than one against us, for the age-long period is, I suggest, in either case, that of the millennium itself. And if it be again objected that in this case we limit the period of the life of the faithful, I reply that that life depends on union with Christ, Who is life, and that it is, therefore, *literally endless*. Comp. Rom. vi. 10, etc.: "The death that He died, He died unto sin once for all, but the life that He liveth He liveth unto God." In no case can we contradict the assurance, "Verily, verily, I say unto you,

He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life." Its period is, therefore, concurrent with the life of Christ. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep My saying he shall never see death." The adjective is in either case limited by the substantive which follows, for, in any case, I believe that scholars will admit that the word translated "everlasting" and "eternal," is rather "age-long," and that translated "punishment," is *habitually* used for *disciplinary* and *corrective* punishment. It is from a word which primarily means to "curtail, dock, or prune." Liddell and Scott, whom no one will accuse of a theological bias, have a note in their Lexicon, which is most important: "The difference between *κολάζω* and *τιμωρέομαι* is stated by Aristotle ('Rhet.' i. 10. 17) to be that the former regards the correction of the offender, the latter the satisfaction of the offended." I feel that it is right, if only in common fairness, to draw attention to this, and the more so as it affects the meaning of the "damnatory clauses" in the Athanasian Creed; what St. Matt. xxv. 46 means, that *they* mean.¹

My suggestion, then, is this: that by the law of righteous recompense, Jesus Christ, who refused the world when offered to Him by the prince of the world (St. Matt. iv. 8-10; St. Luke iv. 5-8), shall reign over the world, and over the prince of this world *cast out*. By the same law, the saints, faithful in life and faithful unto death, shall reign with Him. "It is a faithful saying, for if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him" (2 St. Tim. ii. 11, 12). Satan now reigns with his *demons*, as "prince of the power of the air," as "the spirit which now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. ii. 2). So our wrestling is "not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. vi. 12). In the millennium Satan and his hosts of demons shall be cast out of the "heavenly places," and the saints, of whom St. Paul speaks in 1 Thess. iv., shall take their places, "clothed upon" with spiritual bodies. They are worthy to reign with Him, not *on* the earth, but *over* the earth (see

¹ See my "Victories of Faith," pp. 91-100.

ch. v. 10). Jesus Christ Himself will then and there decide who are the firstfruits ; this decision is the blessed conclusion of the process which, if we are faithful, is daily going on in our hearts, a process (a) of producing, sustaining, restoring, and quickening, and (b) of deciding, rejecting, destroying, and judging. With the absence of the prince of this world, and with the presence of Christ and His saints, the world will be more and more pervaded by the Divine.

This leads us to a deeply interesting thought. There is now going on what we may call a regeneration of individuals, an answer in life to the baptismal regeneration, which is ours, by God's gift at the font. This must involve a bitter conflict with evil, but it involves also a *most blessed loss of demoniacal power over us personally* : "sin shall not have dominion over you ; for ye are not under law, but under grace." In a similar way there will be, in the millennium, a regeneration of *nations*, with *another* loss of satanic influence, such as took place, in measure, when paganism gave way to Christianity. Notice the appalling condition of the world as set forth in Rom. i., and compare the statement about the last days of the world-power in 2 Tim. iii. After that there will be a yet further regeneration, with the *complete destruction* of evil, in the new heavens and the new earth. The millennium will be the Church's correspondence with the Lord's forty days between His resurrection and ascension. By the resurrection and ascension Satan is cast out of heaven : "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." He is no longer there as the accuser of the brethren ; instead, we have the "comfortable word," "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ *the righteous*, and He is the propitiation for our sins." Afterwards, the devil, chained for a definite period, will be cast out of the earth as well, and lastly cast out for ever. Christ's intercourse with the nations in the flesh, Israel being now among them and in their own land, will be analogous to His intercourse with His disciples during the forty days. There will be a blessed consciousness of His presence, both when seen and unseen, such as the Apostles, still in the flesh, felt at the Transfiguration ; that transfiguration is, in fact, a rehearsal in miniature, of the coming millennial reign, St. Peter, St. James, and St. John answering to the nations, while

Jesus Christ, and they who reign with Him, answer to Moses and Elias.

It may be as well to say here that if any one feels a difficulty in reconciling these views with those of "the second coming to judge the world," we must remember that "one day is with the Lord as a *thousand years*, and a *thousand years* as *one day*." "*The acceptable year of the Lord*" has already covered a period of more than eighteen hundred of our years; so it would seem that the advent is one, but in successive stages. It is written in Zech. xiv. 5, "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee." If the saints are to come with Christ, He must first have come for them, as, indeed, He promises (see St. John xiv. 3, R.V.). We have already seen them accompanying Him and making war on antichrist and the false prophet. The judgment on the dead who are not raised till the end of the millennial period, is the crowning stage in "the day of the Lord," in which phrase St. Peter comprises the whole of the grand consummation (2 St. Pet. iii. 8-13).

By this explanation, for a large amount of which I am indebted to my brother-in-law, Canon Fausset, everything seems to fall into its proper place. With it what a far more glorious vista of hope seems to open out to us! Christ's coming will purify the world! Doubtless so long as men are in the flesh sin will remain, but the flesh will become more and more subdued to the spirit, because the temptations from *without* will cease. Painting, sculpture, music, and every fine art, will be *Christ's*, instead of being desecrated, as they too often are now, to the world, the flesh, and the devil. Sin will not have the power which it has now. There will be a foretaste of that yet greater blessing when all evil shall be for ever destroyed. This will, I hope, put more earnestness into our prayers for the Coming of Our Lord; the joy which the prospect opens out is beyond all words.

It is hardly necessary to call attention again to the persons who will enjoy the happiness of the first resurrection, and all that follows. They are described first by their fate, and then by their character. They are (1) The martyrs who suffered death for the testimony of Jesus: "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus." St. Paul was actually beheaded, and attained to the first rank among the martyrs in the first resurrection, as

he had hoped. (2) The faithful in all ages. St. John was no martyr in the generally accepted sense, yet who can doubt that he will have part? or who can say how many thousands who have never been actually put to death for Christ, have been, by reason of long years of conflict, and suffering, and strong temptation, more actually martyrs than many whom the merciful axe decapitated by one almost painless stroke? Of these the literal Israel, in large numbers, will form part, and then the great multitude out of all nations and people and tongues (the Gentile Church), "who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." All who have *held* firmly to "the faith once for all delivered to the saints," all who have been "not of the world." The "rest of the dead" are they who have not shared on earth in that life which Jesus Christ came to bestow. If some of these attain, as we have seen reason to hope many may, to spiritual life, at the end of the *second* resurrection, they do not, in any case, live till the millennium is finished; they who have part in the first resurrection "live and reign with Christ a thousand years." "They" (see "Speaker's Commentary," p. 798) "who from among the rest of the dead shall live with Him after the thousand years are finished, will share in the blessedness of the former, although they have not reigned with Him." The "second death" is, later on, declared to be "the lake of fire." Over those who have part in the first resurrection this has no power; that they also who ultimately live with Christ are released from it seems clear from verse 15.

O God! keep us faithful and true, and give us Thine own gift of perseverance, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

INSTRUCTION XLVIII.

CHAPTER XX. 7 TO XXI. 8.

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.

* Ezek.
38. 2.
& 39. 1.

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, *Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the Saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

10 And the devil that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.

* ch. 3.
5.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened: and another *book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

|| Or,
grave.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it: and death and ||hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they

7 And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of

8 his prison, and shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war: the number of whom is as

9 the sand of the sea. And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down ¹out of heaven, and devoured

10 them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night ²for ever and ever.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to
13 their works. And the

¹ Some ancient authorities insert from God.

² Gr. unto the ages of the ages.

were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire: this is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire.

21 And *I saw a new heaven, and a new earth: for the first heaven, and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy City, new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4 *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

5 And he that sat upon the throne, said, *Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6 And he said unto me, It is done: *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. *I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life, freely.

7 He that overcometh, shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, *even* the lake of

15 fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.

21 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no

2 more. And I saw ¹the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall ²dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, ³and be

4 their God: and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed

5 away. And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he saith, ⁴Write: for these words are faithful and

6 true. And he said unto me, They are come to pass. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life

7 freely. He that overcometh shall inherit

* Is. 65.
17.
2 Pet. 3.
13.

* ch. 7.
17.

* 2 Cor.
5. 17.

* ch. 1.8.
& 22. 13.
* Is. 55.
1.

¹ Or, *the holy city Jerusalem coming down new out of heaven.*

² Gr. *tabernacle.*

³ Some ancient authorities omit, and be *their God.*

⁴ Or, *Write, These words are faithful and true.*

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part *shall be* in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

It is important to notice that we have now a distinct prophecy, rather than a vision. Two things are plain—

(1) That we must unite the former part of this passage with ch. xix. 17–21, and so with Ezek. xxxix. 17–20.

(2) That this is the fulfilment of that which St. John saw in ch. xvi. 14–16. The whole question of the loosing of Satan out of his prison is, of course, most difficult, but it seems to me to fall in exactly with our theory. It is a *necessary preliminary* to the *second resurrection*, if, as we hope and believe, many non-partakers in the first resurrection are then to be found in the Lamb's book of life, *because all obedience and repentance must be put to the test*; it is, indeed, as the whole history of the world and the individual shows, worth little or nothing till it is so tested. Satan is not only permitted, for a very short time, thus to test, but he is also made the agent, under God, of bringing together all the powers of evil that they may be finally and absolutely destroyed, in the most complete sense of the word "destruction." As the hour of his apparent triumph over Christ was really the moment of Christ's victory, so now, in the final assault, led by himself, against Christ and His Church, he, with all evil, is to meet the final doom. The saints, it would appear, do not have to fight; it is "the war of the great day of God, the Almighty." Once again in the history of the true Israel, "the Lord shall fight for them, and they shall hold their peace." The conflict, if such it can be called, will be short, sharp, and decisive. Fire is to come down out of heaven and devour them (see Ezek. xxxviii. 22, 23). Gog and Magog, if we are to look upon them, as without much doubt we must, as illustrations borrowed from Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix., would seem to be the embodiment of the hatred of the people of the world to the people of God, and so to be comprehended

among the evils which are to be destroyed. As in Ezekiel they seem to be expressions symbolical of the heathen nations who were enemies to the literal Israel, so here they symbolize the foes of God and of His Church; this is the last incident of the Church's history as "militant here in earth." The "beloved city" is, of course, Jerusalem, either literally as the abode of the restored Israel, or metaphorically as the Church of Jesus Christ. Then, all thanks to God, the devil is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are, and thus the Church is free, for ever and ever, from all her enemies.

The difficulty about the "nations" will be lessened if we remember that there are before us three classes—

(1) The saints reigning in the heavens over the earth, who have entered into the blessedness and holiness of the first resurrection.

(2) The people on earth who are enjoying the blessedness of the millennium.

(3) These outside nations.

For the expression "the nations" occurring *after* the coming down of the holy city, I suggest an explanation further on.

The destruction of the devil, the beast, and the false prophet, is followed by the second resurrection, and that day which we popularly know as the Day of Judgment. The throne, "white," as an emblem of purity and justice, is "great" in comparison with the "thrones" already mentioned. He who sits upon it is, without doubt, Jesus Christ, as Son of *man*. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son;" the end is now near when His *mediatorial* office will be over, and He will have "delivered up the kingdom to God, even the *Father*." Then the present earth and heavens are dissolved, according to St. Peter's prophecy, to make way for "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Then the scene in St. John v. 28, 29, is enacted: "All that are in the graves," *i.e.* all the *literal* dead, "hear the voice of the Son of man, and come forth." The only exceptions are, they who have already received the "verdict" (xx. 4); they will be *present*, for "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ;" but they are so rather as assessors with Christ, judging the world. "Books" (not *the*

books) are opened : in one of these, I think, is a record of thoughts, words, and deeds of all who come into judgment ; and in the other, names only—the names of those who have been pardoned and justified by Christ. “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins” (Isa. xliv. 22). “If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all My statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him : in his righteousness that he hath done, he shall live” (Ezek. xviii. 21, 22 ; comp. also 1 Cor. vi. 9–11, with ch. vii.). The expression “Death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them,” seems to present no difficulty ; but what is meant by “the sea” ? Some interpret it literally ; but though there may be much to be said for this, I incline personally to the idea that it is a metaphor for the troublesome world and the men who are in it : they are like those who lived in the time of Noe and Lot ; they are altogether absorbed in the world, forgetful of the claims of God, and of the appearing and kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ ; they are those who are still living on the earth in trespasses and sins when the time of judgment arrives. Thus we have, in harmony with Holy Scripture, the three sources whence men come to the judgment.

As I have several times stated, it is beyond the province of these Instructions to enter into the question of eternal hope ; but I cannot pass over the fact that the end of the finally impenitent is *clearly stated* here to be the same as that of Death and of Hades, it is “the lake of fire, which is the second death.” Now Death is to be *destroyed* ; of that there can be no doubt : “the last enemy that shall be *destroyed* is *death*.” With it must be fulfilled this revelation to them that “know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ;” they are to be “punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe . . . in that day.”¹ I would fain *hope* that they who are to come into this condemnation will be very few ; nay, with all my heart I *hope* there will be none. I do believe, as I have expressed it elsewhere, that no soul ever was, is

¹ 2 Thess. i. 9, 10.

now, or ever will be, *finally* and *irrevocably* lost, until God has, as it were, put His arms round the neck of that soul, looked it in the face, shown it its sin, and His own love, His own being, and His own Catholic truth, and then the soul has deliberately rejected the love, apostatized from the faith, chosen the sin! But, whatever our *hopes* may be, we cannot and dare not twist and turn Holy Scripture to make it suit our own views. Thus we cannot get away from the fact that the "lake of fire" is the appointed lot both of Death and Hades, and of "whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life." If we are to admit hope for these, as I confess I should, with all my heart, like to do, if I could do it with loyalty to God's Word, the same must be admitted for Death and Hades, which none can wish. I believe it to be in both cases that which Holy Scripture declares it to be—"destruction." This does not invalidate my previous suggestion that there may be a *temporary* and salutary experience of it—the "saving, so as by fire." One thing is certain, that in the new heavens and the new earth, there is no more death, either in its first or second meaning, no sorrow, no crying, no pain.

Now, with the final destruction of all evil comes the third regeneration, that of the earth—the new heavens and the new earth—and this with the new value of assured permanence, because all evil is destroyed. With regard to the sea, it is not said "there was a new sea," but "the sea is no more." I admit that this is a strong argument in favour of the literal interpretation, though it may mean, as before, the restless, troublesome, peaceless world. In any case, it can destroy no longer, and no longer separate or hurt. The *new* earth has *new* inhabitants; these members of the Church *triumphant* are, in the fullest sense, "in Christ," a *new* creation; their centre is another new creation, the Holy City, "new Jerusalem." In fact, everything, as being the work of the Blessed Lord, is new. As in the past, it was said "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made;" so now it might be said, "All things are made new by Him, and without Him is not anything made new that is made new." The "first things," resulting from sin, "are passed away:" all tears, mourning, and crying; the great mystery of pain is resolved, and it has no more work to do in the way of chastisement. Satan, the God-opposing, Church-opposing

world-power, the false prophet, with all false teaching and false doctrine, are no more ; there are now no divisions, sects, or parties ; *the truth* is seen by all, and acknowledged by all. The "Holy Catholic Church" is exhibited now in beautiful unity under Christ Himself. The High-Priestly prayer, "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us," is fully answered. Thus St. John sees the new Jerusalem—a picture familiar to us in other portions of the New Testament—coming down out of heaven from God, as a bride adorned for her husband. My own strong impression is that we have here again the blessed and holy beings who have had part in the first resurrection, and who have been already seen sharing Christ's kingdom in glory in *the heavens*, whence it is that the holy city comes. If I am correct, then they who, after trial, are *afterwards* saved, and found in the Lamb's Book of Life, form the "nations" that are spoken of later on. They are not *burgesses*, but they walk in, or by, the light of the city ; their kings bring their glory and honour into it ; they are perfectly happy, going in and out of the city, but there are degrees of glory, and, as the door was shut when the Bridegroom came, so they are not now admitted to all the honour which the burgesses enjoy. The metaphor of the Bride we have dealt with already, and it is too familiar to need further remark, but I must remind you that the whole of this scene, in both its metaphors, presents to us most powerfully the sharpest of contrasts—New Jerusalem with Babylon, the bride with the harlot !

The force of the passage in verse 3 is in the definite article—the tabernacle ; that in the wilderness, with its "sanctuary of this world," with its furniture, sacrifices, and priestly and high-priestly work, was a figure of the true ; it has been already fulfilled in Christ as Victim and High Priest, and in the ministry of His Church on earth ; but it is *consummated* here. There is no longer "a *shadow* of good things to come," but the *complete* realization of them. The old promise (Lev. xxvi. 11, 12), "I will set My tabernacle among you ; and My soul shall not abhor you : and I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be My people," now reads in its fullest and highest perfection, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His peoples, and

God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." Notice that all that follows rests upon the truth and faithfulness of Jesus Christ. It seems clear that it is He who speaks both in vs. 5 and 6. The words "it is done" are rather "they are come to pass," *i.e.* "all the promises of God in Him are Yea, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God the Father." All that was promised to St. John, as the seer, in ch. i. 8, in the Revelation of the Alpha and Omega as the eternal, unchangeable, and Almighty, is now fulfilled. The thirst for holiness and righteousness is abundantly satisfied, and the end of every triumph against sin, is inheritance of *the things which have been shown us here*—freedom from death, whether the first or the second; freedom from sorrow, crying, and pain; from the assaults of the devil, the beast, and the false prophet; free admission, not to the stream only, but to "the *fountain* of the water of life;" full enjoyment of filial relationship with God; and, whether burgesses or not, free admission to the blessings of the holy city. On the cross our Lord cried, "It is finished," announcing the completion of His suffering as *victim*. Here is another and yet more glorious "it is finished," introducing the consummation and restitution of all things. It is, of course, meant to be an encouragement to us who are still bearing the burden and heat of the day and the horrors of the conflict.

"O joy all joys beyond,
To see the Lamb who died,
And count each sacred wound
In Hands, and Feet, and Side;
To give to Him the praise
Of every triumph won,
And sing through endless days
The great things He hath done."

(Hymns A. & M., 230.)

But the final words of this section are words of *warning*, telling us of those who, if unrepentant, must face the second death. These are—

(1) The cowardly, who have not faced the foe; just the opposite of "him that overcometh."

(2) The *faithless*, in every sense of the term.

(3) Those who have been partakers of the spirit of the "abomination of desolation," enemies of the New Jerusalem, thus furnishing us with another parallel, this time with St. Matt. xxiv. 15. It includes also, as some of the other

expressions do, the followers of Babylon, the mother of harlots and abominations, who (see ch. xvii. 4) is pictured as having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and the filthiness of her spiritual sin.

(4) Murderers.

(5) Fornicators, both literal and spiritual.

(6) All who have tampered with the magical arts of the heathen, and, classically, all whom we should call "worthless fellows."

(7) Idolaters; here again literal and spiritual. As covetousness is idolatry, so is anything set up in our hearts to the exclusion of Christ.

(8) All *liars*; all children of the devil, who is the father of lies and of liars; all who are false and deceitful, and thus in league with the Evil One, and with his one great lie; all who have loved his lie better than God's truth (see St. John viii. 44, and 1-Tim. iv. 1, 2).

"For all our individual transgressions against Thee; for the literal or spiritual breach of any of Thy commandments, we earnestly desire, and ask for, the gift of true repentance; for Thine own pardon and absolution; for whole and hearty amendment of life we pray, for ourselves and for others, that *all* may know Thee, from the least unto the greatest; that *all* may be 'turned from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God;' that Thou wouldest have mercy upon *all* men; that Thou, the Almighty, wilt mercifully prove Thyself almighty in this, and deliver all Thy creatures from the second death;

"We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord."

INSTRUCTION XLIX.

CHAPTER xxi. 9-21.

9 And there came unto me one of the seven Angels, which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the Bride, the Lamb's wife.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

11 Having the glory of God : and her light *was* like unto a stone most precious ; even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal,

12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve Angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

13 On the East three gates, on the North three gates, on the South three gates, and on the West three gates.

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.

15 And he that talked with me, had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth : and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs : the length, and

9 And there came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, who were laden with the seven last plagues ; and he spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the wife

10 of the Lamb. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and shewed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

11 having the glory of God : her ¹light was like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone,

12 clear as crystal : having a wall great and high ; having twelve ²gates, and at the ²gates twelve angels ; and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of

13 Israel : on the east were three ²gates ; and on the north three ²gates ; and on the south three ²gates ; and on the west three

14 ²gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the

15 Lamb. And he that spake with me had for a measure a golden reed to measure the city, and the ²gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And

16 the city lieth foursquare, and the length thereof is as great as the breadth : and he measured the city

¹ Gr. *luminary*.

² Gr. *portals*.

the breadth, and the height of it are equal.

17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred, and forty, and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the Angel.

18 And the building of the wall of it was of Jasper, and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was Jasper, the second Sapphire, the third a Chalcedony, the fourth an Emerald,

20 The fifth Sardonyx, the sixth Sardius, the seventh Chrysolite, the eighth Beryl, the ninth a Topaz, the tenth a Chrysoprasus, the eleventh a Jacinth, the twelfth an Amethyst.

21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, every several gate was of one pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs: the length and the breadth and the height thereof

17 are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man,

18 that is, of an angel. And the building of the wall thereof was jasper: and the city was pure gold,

19 like unto pure glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, ¹sapphire; the third, chalcedony;

20 the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh,

²jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. And the

21 twelve ³gates were twelve pearls; each one of the several ³gates was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, ⁴as it were transparent glass.

¹ Or, lapis lazuli.

² Or, sapphire.
³ Gr. portals.

⁴ Or, transparent as glass.

It will be noticed that at the close of this book we have dealt with much longer passages than we did at the commencement; the reason of this is that there is much less detail to explain. Here, for example, we have already considered the seven bowls, full of, or laden with, the seven last plagues (see ch. xvii. 1): we have seen, also, how one of the angels who held them, showed St. John the mystery of the harlot. Now, most beautifully, one of the same seven angels shows him the exact opposite, the bride, the Lamb's wife. Note that as the harlot is a city, so the bride is one. This revelation comes in most appropriately at the close of the previous verse, for now the last plague is over, and no such thing as a plague exists anywhere. The city is then described; St. John sees it as foretold in Isa. ii. 2, 3. Compare also Heb. xii. 22, 23. You will see how appropriate

the former passage is to the idea that the 144,000, "those who are Christ's at His coming," are the *burgesses* of the city, and the others, saved at the second resurrection, are the *nations* who are outside, but who come in and go out with perfectly free access. The latter passage, too, in the expression, "Church of the *first-born*" seems remarkably to bear out my theory. Compare also, as following on the judgment of Gog and Magog, Ezek. xl. 2. The first feature in the city is that she has the glory of God; everything that she has had has been from Him, and Him alone; her cry, throughout her life militant, has ever been, "Thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory;" "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." But it is more than this: as the tabernacle of God is with men, so the chief glory of the earthly tabernacle has its correspondence here: in the one case it was the *shekinah*, the visible symbol of the Divine glory; now it is God Himself. That this is the sense seems clear from what follows about the light; for, as the *shekinah* shed its light upon the sanctuary of old, so the glory of God lights up this city; "her light" is *not* the light which proceeds from her, but "her luminary," that which *gives* her light, namely, the glory of God, though in turn she gives light to others, as we are told in verse 24. The luminary is described as "like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal." Next in the description is the wall, "great and high." I do not think, as some do, that this is for *protection*, for I believe that all enemies are now destroyed, and with them all danger of attack. It is rather a fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, ch. lx. 18. "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise." See also Isa. xxvi. 1, and, as most appropriate with our subject, that which immediately follows:—"Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in." In the mention of the gates, or rather portals (as presenting the thought of that which is imposing, with the buttresses, arches, and crowning towers), there can be little doubt that the prophecy of Ezekiel, here in its concluding passages, is again in the seer's mind. If we connect—as I suggest—the 144,000 with the partakers in the first resurrection, and look upon them, as we have, as being the citizens of this new Jerusalem,

then we have a beautiful picture of the true Israel of God. For (see Ezek. xlviii. 31) "The gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel;" there is a gate for each quarter: Reuben, Judah, and Levi northward; Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan, eastward; Simeon, Issachar, and Zebulon, on the south; Gad, Asher, and Naphthali on the west. It will be remembered that Dan is excluded from the list in ch. vii., and Manasseh takes his place. Now connect the promise, "The name of the city shall be, 'the Lord is there,'" with "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." A gate at *every* quarter of the city gives access from each point of the compass, and seems to afford us another beautiful parallel (see St. Luke xiii. 29), "They shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." The access is moreover unhindered, for the gates are never shut. An angel is at each gate; angels have been so intimately associated with the fortunes of the Church militant, that it would seem altogether out of due order if they were absent from the glory of the Church triumphant; so God, who has "ordained and constituted the services of angels and men in a wonderful order," preserves the union between them now. As they were "ministering spirits sent forth to do service for them that shall inherit salvation," so, now that the inheritance has been entered into, they do service for them still. The superscription of the twelve tribes only emphasizes what has been already said. We next come to the foundations, the consideration of which need present no difficulty, though a question has been raised as to the reference of St. John to himself, and another as to the position of St. Paul. I feel that we shall all be content to leave such unprofitable questions alone, and be satisfied with the familiar words, "O God, who hast built Thy Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the head cornerstone."

You will remember that in ch. xi. we noted the measuring of the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worshipped therein, but the *exclusion* of the outer court, the court of the Gentiles. The idea to be connected with the measurement was, as we saw, that of consecration

and preservation, and the reason for the exclusion of the outer court was, among others, that Jerusalem was to be trodden down of the Gentiles, "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." That time has now arrived; the fulness of the Gentiles *has* come in, there is now "neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all;" and so the *whole* city is measured without exception. For the meaning of the reed, compare Instruction XXIII. Here it is "golden," as the city itself is pure gold. The whole idea seems to be to emphasize the perfect consecration of the place, and everything within it, down to the smallest details, as set forth in Zech. xiv. 20, 21.

There can be but little question of the symbolical character of the next passage; it can hardly be literal, if the height is the same as the length and breadth. The idea is, I think, to set forth once again, simple perfection, harmony, and symmetry. The similar significance of the number 12,000 we have noticed before. If those commentators are right, as I think they are, who see here a correspondence, though on a larger scale, with the Holy of Holies, a perfect cube, then the suggested thought of the perfection of *worship* is a very beautiful one (compare 1 Kings vi. 20). The glory of Heaven will be its worship. And this thought ought to deepen our reverence for the earthly house of God, and all its accessories. In the measuring of the wall we have again the Church-number 12, in this instance squared. Professor Milligan thinks that this is the measurement of the *breadth* of the wall, giving the idea of thickness and solidity. Certainly if the height is meant it is out of all proportion to that of the city itself; but I feel convinced myself that the whole picture is simply symbolical of perfection, and can only be understood after a heavenly and spiritual manner. The standard of measurement is that of the angel, but there is no dissimilarity between it and that of a man, for the declaration in St. Matt. xxii. 30 is now fulfilled, "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." The materials of the city enhance this picture of perfection; the structure of the wall is of jasper, on which the pure crystal light already noticed is reflected. The city itself is built of the most precious material known, gold; even that has an added glory, in that it is like pure glass.

Ezekiel's prophecy is clearly once again in the mind of St. John (see Ezek. xxviii. 13). In the apocryphal book, Tobit, ch. xiii. 16, 17, there is also a kindred passage: "For Jerusalem shall be built up with sapphires, and emeralds, and precious stone: thy walls and towers and battlements with pure gold. And the streets of Jerusalem shall be paved with beryl and carbuncle and stones of Ophir." The foundations have already been seen to contain the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb; so here they are twelve in number, each being a precious stone, and thus adorning the foundations of the wall of the city with *every precious stone*.

∴ The main teaching is, I think, the blending together, in perfect unity, of different qualities, all precious in themselves. Thus they are typical of the different graces of the different members of the Church. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord; and there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all." So each stone, filled with its appropriate Divine light, shines forth appropriately to the glory of God. Nevertheless, it may be interesting to describe the jewels briefly.

(1) The first foundation was jasper: the last of the stones of the high priest's breastplate, and, from its description here, more like a diamond than any stone which we now know by the name of jasper.

(2) Sapphire: in the margin of the Revised Version, lapis lazuli. The true sapphire is next in hardness and value to the diamond, and mostly of a blue colour of various shades; the lapis lazuli is opaque, inclining often to the deep colour of the violet. It is fifth in the high priest's breastplate.

(3) Chalcedony: an inferior kind of emerald, so called, Mr. King says, from being found in the copper mines near Chalcedon; it changes its colour when moved about, like the green feathers on the necks of peacocks.

(4) Emerald: fourth also in the breastplate of the high priest. Fully considered in ch. iv. 3.

(5) Sardonyx. Archdeacon Lee, quoting from Brande's "Dictionary of Science," says that this is the most beautiful and rarest variety of onyx.

(6) Sardius: first in the high priest's breastplate. It seems to be the sardine stone already referred to in ch. iv. 3.

(7) Chrysolite : identical with the modern topaz ; second in the high priest's breastplate.

(8) Beryl : tenth in the breastplate, a stone of a pale sea-green colour, inclining sometimes to blue, and sometimes to yellow.

(9) Topaz : another variety of chrysolite.

(10) Chrysoprase. This seems to be a variety of the beryl.

(11) Jacinth. See ch. ix. 17.

(12) Amethyst : last here, and ninth in the high priest's breastplate. It is believed to be that which still bears the same name. The ancients believed that it possessed the power of dispelling drunkenness from those who wore or touched it.

Thus the stones may represent (as in this last instance, temperance) the great cardinal virtues, the opposites of which exclude from the Holy City. The gates of pearl, and the street of gold, like transparent glass, each street, I imagine, leading up from each several gate, need present no difficulty : all is *figurative* of the glory of the city ; the pearl was held in the highest rank among precious stones, and Our Blessed Lord's own picture of "the pearl of great price" is sufficient indication of the explanation we should attach to the revelation.

Can we sum up better than in the well-known words translated from the rhythm of St. Bernard, by Dr. Neale?—

"The Cross is all thy splendour,
The Crucified thy praise ;
His laud and benediction
Thy ransomed people raise.
With jasper glow thy bulwarks,
Thy streets with emeralds blaze ;
The sardius and the topaz
Unite in thee their rays ;
Thine ageless walls are bonded
With amethyst unpriced ;
The saints build up thy fabric,
And the corner-stone is Christ.

O sweet and blessed country,
Shall I ever see thy face ?
O sweet and blessed country,
Shall I ever win thy grace ?
I have the hope within me
To comfort and to bless !
Shall I ever win the prize itself ?
O tell me, tell me, Yes !"

INSTRUCTION L.

CHAPTER xxi. 22 TO xxii. 5.

- 22 And I saw no Temple therein: For the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the Temple of it.
- * Is. 60. 19. 23 *And the city had no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.
- * Is. 60. 3. 24 *And the nations of them which are saved, shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.
- * Is. 60. 11. 25 *And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.
- 26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.
- 27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.
- 22 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as Crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.
- 2 In the midst of the street of it, and of either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.
- 3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne
- 22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof. And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, ¹and the lamp thereof *is* the Lamb. And the nations shall walk ²amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory into it. And the ³gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there): and they shall bring the glory and the honour of the nations into it: and there shall in no wise enter into it anything ⁴unclean, or he that ⁵maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they which are written in the
- 22 Lamb's book of life. And he shewed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was ⁷the tree of life, bearing twelve ⁸manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.
- 3 And there shall be ⁹no curse any more: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein:
- ¹ Or, and the Lamb, the lamp thereof.
² Or, by.
³ Gr. portals.
⁴ Gr. common.
⁵ Or, doeth.
⁶ Or, the Lamb. In the midst of the street thereof, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life.
⁷ Or, a tree.
⁸ Or, crops of fruit.
⁹ Or, no more any-thing accursed.

of God, and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him.

4 And they shall see his face, and his name *shall be* in their foreheads.

* ch. 21.
23.

5 *And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.

and his servants shall do him service; and they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* on

5 their foreheads. And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign ¹for ever and ever.

¹ Gr.
*unto the
ages of
the ages.*

ST. JOHN'S picture of perfection seems now to reach its climax. But the passage needs explanation. The glory of our Christian cities, so far as their buildings go, is our churches. Be their architecture grand or poor, they stand as witnesses for God, now warning the busy money-getters that this life is not all; and anon encouraging the weary toiler to look forward to heaven's rest. Open doors and daily services invite to meditation, *worship*, and prayer. There can be few greater mistakes than to keep our churches closed, while it is an act of disobedience to forego the daily matins and evensong unless we are reasonably hindered. Yet here in the holy city St. John sees no temple, *i.e.* no sanctuary, no Holy of holies; and this because the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the sanctuary. *Every* part, therefore, and not one specially selected spot, is holy. We go back almost instinctively to Heb. ix. That "sanctuary of this world" has, even now, given place to the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands: even now, in the highest act of Christian worship, we can, through the ministry of the Church on earth, present and plead the all-perfect memorial which has replaced that of bulls and goats; even now we can worship and adore the Unseen; and all this enhances the value of our earthly temples. But *there* there will be no need of sacraments; the reality has come; *there* there will be no need for faith, for sight has replaced it; and none for special centres of worship, for every heart and every place will be filled full with the presence of God Himself. "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." "Now we see in a mirror, darkly,¹—especially in the holy sacraments—then face to face."

¹ The original here might be more closely translated "in an enigma."

In the scene before us that "then" has come; "they shall see His face" (ch. xxii. 4).

As the city has no visible temple, so, and for similar reasons, it has no need of sun or moon to shine in it. The prophecies of Isaiah—chs. xxiv. 23, and lx. 19, 20—are fulfilled. God, who is Light, and that "True Light which lighteth every man, coming into the world," the Lord, who calls Himself "the Light of the world," have no need of their own created luminaries. It should be noted that the word associated with the Lamb is "*lamp*" rather than light; but there is, of course, no suggestion of inferiority. In the earthly tabernacle there were seven lamps, which were lighted every evening, and dressed every morning (see Exod. xxvii. 20, 21). The meaning then would beautifully be, "here there is no need of these, for Christ Himself is there," the "brightness of the Father's glory." A passage in the Wisdom of Solomon might be most beautifully applied to Him, as the Wisdom of God: "He is the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty; therefore can no defiled thing fall on Him. For He is the brightness of the everlasting Light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of His goodness" (Wisd. vii. 25, 26).

In the next verse the Revised Version omits the words, "of them that are saved," and in so doing is, doubtless, following the most authentic manuscripts. Some would have us understand the expression "nations" as signifying the heathen, and, in that case, it is suggested that we have here those who "having not the law, are a law unto themselves," following a high and lofty standard on earth, without knowing Christ, and then, in the life of the world to come, becoming His subjects. Professor Milligan argues against this limitation, and my own previously expressed belief and hope are greatly strengthened by this passage, namely, that we have in these nations those who, though not the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb, are ultimately saved, their names being found in the Lamb's book of life. The light is so brilliant as to be enough for them as well as for the burgesses.

The exact translation of the latter part of the verse, and of verse 26, is important. In the former the words "and honour" are to be omitted. The kings of the earth, *i.e.* of

the *new* earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, will all be subordinate to the King of kings, "that which was made glorious having now no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory which excelleth." Then, in verse 26, their subjects—making, with them, the "nations"—bring all that the nation has of glory and honour into it. Everything is subordinate to the city, or rather to the God who rules there, and the differences and degrees are no source of jealousy or of unsanctified ambition. As "one star differeth from another star in glory," so each one here feels and realizes that he is in his proper place. Deliverance for ever from all sin or possibility of falling is the great source of happiness, through God's mercy in Jesus Christ. Even though it be the lowest place, "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness," and thus it is that we are led, beautifully and appropriately, to the last verse: "There shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." It is not only "every person that defileth," but "everything;" it is the supremest thought of joy, that, in the presence of God and of our Saviour in this holy city and its environs, there shall not be a single stain of sin. What a long and weary struggle it is here! it is not only the sound of wars and rumours of wars, nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, hideous cruelties going on in the dark corners of the earth, and in lands which call themselves Christ's, deeds done which would disgrace the barbarians; it is not only drunkenness, our own great national sin, the teeming parent of many another deep, dark, and hateful crime, the cause of unspeakable misery, of squalor and filth, and hunger and destitution, and ruin, and beggary, and death; but *within us*, who at least hope that we have the firstfruits of the Spirit, there are groanings like those of the Holy Spirit Himself, which cannot be uttered; it *is here* one long struggle, one continual temptation and watching, which, through the weakness of the flesh, is often weary work; prayer which, for the same reason, is often lifeless and unspiritual, and love which, all too often, grows cold; it is always "trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or some other adversity," or temptation, or sin. The marvel that we keep hopeful is attributable only to the gift of God, and to

the hope that is "anchored within the veil."¹ *There* nothing that is unclean can enter; *there* there is no room for dread, lest, even for a little season, any of these sorrow-causes shall be loosed again. They are cast into the lake of fire.

But, in and out of the city go "they which are written in the Lamb's book of life"—only they, because there are now none others! In and out of the city, whose gates are always open. "The gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there)," clearly, I should think, for the purpose mentioned in Isa. lx. 11, "that men may bring unto it the wealth of the nations, and their kings led with them." The difference between the two passages is, that now "there is no night." We are justified by the context in putting both a literal and a spiritual interpretation upon this; literally, no night, because of the light furnished by the glory of God and of the Lamb, and spiritually no moral night, because no sin can enter. So St. Augustine, dealing with St. John's statement about Judas in the thirteenth chapter of his holy Gospel, v. 30, says, "It was night, and he himself who went out was night."

The promise is repeated in the fifth verse of chapter xxii. in connection with the ceaseless service, worship, and reign of God's people; service without fatigue, worship without ceasing, reign not merely for a thousand years, but into the ages of the ages. The greater part of the rest of the passage seems to need but little comment, as so many of the expressions and pictures have been already considered. It is, however, interesting to note the patent fact that we have here the correlative of the earlier chapters in the Book of Genesis. The paradise there lost is here regained; the new heaven and the new earth replace the old creation; that old serpent, who brought disobedience into the world, "and death, and all our woe, with loss of Eden," is now, with death, the last enemy, destroyed. The curse everywhere is changed to blessing everywhere. The tree of life, the way to which God—mercifully as I read it—barred by the flaming sword of the cherubim, is now open to all through the never closed gates, and that from every point of

¹ Grand words of far-reaching encouragement to those whose hopes are sometimes clouded over, are to be found in the Persian poems, from which I have already once quoted—

"Set thy whole affection on that for which thou hast no hope;
For thou hast come thus far from original hopelessness."

"*Divāni Shamsi Tabriz*," Nicholson's translation, p. 191.

the compass. The river which watered Eden and then parted into four heads, is now *one*, "of the water of life," allaying our spiritual thirst, to "our great and endless comfort." Other features of the very creation are changed; the material luminaries giving way to the light of God Himself, and the alternations of day and night ceasing, because all toil and travail are over. More than this, types and shadows, most precious in themselves, give way to blessed reality: "They shall see His face." The baptismal name, which, alas! we have so often discredited, is now re-written, clearly and distinctly, by the finger of God Himself; and, as regards the other blessed sacrament, all that is now of faith is exchanged for sight.

This leads to the revelation of the restored tree of life. We need make no difficulty of the expression "tree of life" in the singular number, and those which imply its plural existence, "in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river;" in Ezek. xlvii., verse 7, and especially verse 12, we read of there being many trees, yet they are, after all, but one, for each is the tree of life, and that tree of life is Christ. On Him we feed now, in the blessed sacrament: He is the "Bread of Life;" in Him we live now: "To me to live is Christ;" by Him we are healed now: "I will heal thee of thy wounds" (Jer. xxx. 17); and He who has been all, and given all to us here on this earthly scene, will be all in all to us then. It seems best to read, as in the margin of the Revised Version, "crops of fruit" instead of "manner of fruits," the idea being that of plentiful, continuous, and endless refreshment. Possessing the fruits they shall hunger no more, and enjoying the river they shall thirst no more. The leaves of the tree are not only for the healing, but for the *health* of the nations. The healing of sickness, physical and moral, has already taken place, for sickness, and pain, and death have passed away. But inasmuch as we shall ever need Christ, as our *life*, so shall we ever need Him as our *health*; this, to keep up the picture, is one of the objects of the constant ingress of the nations. Classically the word is used not of healing by medicine only, but of that fostering, tending, nurture, and care which keep a man in health. Plato uses it in this sense in relation both to the body and the soul.

It would be well for us if we kept constantly in mind the truth that sin is sickness of the soul, that salvation is the

“getting rid of sin,” and thus were constantly and earnestly seeking, in penitence and faith, the remedies of the Good Physician. We fly, even for a slight pain or discomfort, to an earthly doctor, who, even with the wonderful tenderness and skill and love which mark the majority of his calling—for they are a class of men of whom I can only speak in the highest terms of admiration and respect—is often unable to remove our complaint. Oh! in our spiritual sickness to go at once to Christ, who can and will heal all who truly come to Him; not to fall into the mistake of thinking that our sickness, even if it be that of leprosy, separates us from Him or makes *us* loathsome in His sight; it is our sin that is loathsome, not we; the leprosy puts us in the condition of needing Him. “Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed.” To the loving suppliant pleading, “My servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented,” Jesus answered, “I will come and heal him.” So He does now with all who seek Him for their own spiritual needs, or those of others.

Dean Goulburn, writing on the Collect for St. Luke's Day, well says, “That the heart should open towards the Good Physician in repentance and faith is the one secret of spiritual health, into which Luke the physician was himself indoctrinated, and into which he would indoctrinate the Church. All the diseases of our souls, however inveterate, may be healed in this method—the fever-fit of lust, or pride, or ambition, the paralysis of the will induced by habits of evil-doing, the blindness of the eyes of the understanding, the deafness of the inward ear to God's voice, the proneness of the natural heart to earth and the things of earth, even as the woman possessed with a spirit of infirmity was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. We speak of these diseases as various; and various they are in their forms, but they have all one root in the corruption of our nature; sins are many, but sin is one. And the remedy for all of them is one and the same. As all trace back to the fall of Adam, and to the depravation and disorganization of human nature in that fall, so does the remedy trace back in all cases to the righteousness of the second Adam, both in His life and His death, and to the reconstitution of humanity in Him, as its new Covenant Head.”

"O Saviour Christ, Thou too art Man ;
Thou hast been troubled, tempted, tried ;
Thy kind but searching glance can scan
The very wounds which shame would hide ;

"Thy touch hath still its ancient power ;
No word from Thee can fruitless fall ;
Hear, in this solemn evening hour,
And in Thy mercy heal us all." Amen.
(Hymns A. & M., 20.)

"To me to live is Christ," *on* Him,
The precious corner-stone,
I build my house in faith, and lean
Upon His strength alone.

"To me to live is Christ," *in* Him,
Firm and secure, I stand,
And know that no opposing power
Can pluck me from His hand.

"To me to live is Christ," *to* Him
I fly in all my need,
And pray Him with the bread of life
My fainting soul to feed.

"To me to live is Christ," *from* Him
I draw a full supply
Of grace, enabling me to fight
And win the victory.

"To me to live is Christ," *for* Him
I daily strive to live,
My wish—more fully still to Him
My life's best days to give.

"To me to live is Christ," *with* Him
I hold communion blest,—
Foretaste of that more glorious day
Of never-broken rest.

And thus enriched, what can I need
Yet more to fill my heart ?
Nought, nought but this, dear Lord, one day
To see Thee as Thou art !

To me to live will then be Christ
Indeed, for in its train
My very death will bring to me
The everlasting gain !

C. S.

INSTRUCTION LI.

CHAPTER xxii. 6-16.

6 And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy Prophets sent his Angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

7 Behold, I come quickly : Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down, to worship before the feet of the Angel, which shewed me these things.

* ch. 19. 10. 9 Then saith he unto me, *See thou do it not : for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the Prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book : worship God.

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book : for the time is at hand.

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still : and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still : and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still : and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

* Rom. 2. 6. 12 And behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, *to give every man according as his work shall be.

* Is. 41. 4. & 44. 6. 13 I am Alpha and Omega, *the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

6 And he said unto me, These words are faithful and true : and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass. And behold, I come quickly. Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John am he that heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not : I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them which keep the words of this book : worship God.

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book ; for the time is at hand. He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness ¹still : and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy ¹still : and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness ¹still : and he that is holy, let him be made holy ¹still. Behold, I come quickly ; and my ²reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is.

13 I am the Alpha and the

¹ Or, yet more.

² Or, wages.

14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15 For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whore-mongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

16 I Jesus have sent mine Angel, to testify unto you these things in the Churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have ¹the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the ²gates into the city.

15 Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and ³maketh a lie.

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things ⁴for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright, the morning star.

¹ Or, the authority over.

² Gr. portals.

³ Or, doeth.

⁴ Gr. over.

It seems clear that just as the revelation proper commenced at ch. iv. 1, so it is now ended. Its concluding words, which we considered last time, furnish the Church militant, and all its members, with a foresight of the blessed hope which lies before them, the sight of God, the light of His Presence, and their reign with Him for ever and ever. What follows seems to be by way of *summary*. We must, probably, therefore, look upon the opening statement not as a fresh revelation, but rather as a re-statement of ch. xxi. 5. In that case the words which immediately follow are *St. John's*. It is as though he said, "The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has made a revelation by signs (see ch. i. 1)—'sent and *signified*' not to me, his servant John *only*, but to each and all of His servants in every age; and now I would remind you, each reader and hearer, that the angel has already put his imprimatur upon all that I, obeying his instructions, have made known to you." St. John's spirit, like that of each true prophet of old, had been guided and taught by the Holy Spirit, dividing to each severally as He would, putting each one in his proper place, and using him just at His own time and for His glory. This passage is, I suggest, the reproduction of the statement, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (xix. 10). The prophets are, in verse 9, spoken of as St. John's brethren; not only as being one in thought

and heart and aim with him, but as linking him with them in prophecy, and so enforcing the authority of the book. It may, and indeed with many it certainly does, need this emphatic testimony to its faithfulness and truth. The *raison d'être* of these very Instructions is to induce people to study this book more, and so appreciate it better, instead of putting it aside as a hopelessly unintelligible enigma, of little more practical use than the Sibylline oracles. We are all, moreover, deeply grateful to have this assurance, that the revelation of future glory and bliss is not the mere result of ecstatic imagination, but a sure and certain hope. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

"Behold ! I come quickly ;" not only the words of Christ, brought forward from ch. iii. 11, but the words of one of St. John's prophet-brethren, the author of the Book of Malachi : see Mal. iii. 1. This coming of Christ quickly is clearly one of the *main* thoughts which the Apostle would enforce ; it is repeated in vs. 12 and 20, while the nearness of the approach, and the solemn lessons emphasized by the thought are forcibly brought out in vs. 10 and 11, and are evidently before the Apostle's mind. Notice the correspondence between the *words*, which are "faithful and true," and the *condition* of the blessing : "Blessed is he that keepeth the *words*." Originally the blessing was to the reader and hearers of this prophecy ; now it is to him who, having heard and read, keeps it.

The next verse seems to make the fact of this being St. John's summary quite clear. It will be noticed at once that he concludes his holy Gospel in a similar way. What follows is a recapitulation of ch. xix. 10, drawing particular attention to his mistake, warning men of the danger of temporarily glorifying him as the author of the book, and so leading them to the glory and worship of God only. It seems incredible that a man of love and truth like St. John could have fallen *again* into the mistake of worshipping the angel. I look upon this as conclusive. Verse 10 may appear, at first sight, a fresh utterance of the angel, but I think it is only an enlargement of ch. i. 11, and i. 19 enforced, as in the opening of the book, by the statement, "The time is at hand." This seems to guide us best to the solemn passage which follows. Without in the

least degree weakening past arguments, it practically summarizes them all into some such warning as this: When the end comes—and Christ may appear at any moment, though men are saying, “Where is the promise of His coming?”—then each soul will belong to one or another of these three classes:—

(1) They who form the 144,000, the firstfruits unto God, and to the Lamb, who are the burgesses of the new Jerusalem.

(2) They who, though not among the firstfruits of the Lamb, not “His at His coming,” and so not reigning with Him during the thousand-year period, are yet saved ultimately, so as through fire, and found His at the Day of Judgment.

(3) They who, at the end of the period of Christ’s coming, having had every opportunity, close their hearts finally to the love of God.

One thing must be perfectly clear, that the passage cannot imply that God wishes any one to remain unjust or filthy, for “He willeth not the death of a sinner,” and to remain willingly in one or other of these conditions, or in any kindred one, is to be “dead in trespasses and sins.” It is also clear that there is no limit put to the Divine power and mercy, for what limit is possible to omnipotence? But, while I cannot reconcile the idea that sin will always exist with the promise—faithful and true—“there shall be no curse any more;” while I am sure that, where there is the faintest breathing of the Spirit of God, there is hope (for you may as easily conceive light and darkness being in a room at one and the same time, as imagine the action of the Holy Spirit to be apart from love), I nevertheless read here only another utterance of the great truth, “Behold, *now* is the acceptable time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation.” It is another announcement of the *inalienable* law that sin *must and ever will* tend to death, leading legitimately, and, as I may say, naturally, from God, while holiness is ever progressive in the other direction, leading up to the very vision of God Himself. Therefore now that the time is at hand, “seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near.”

St. John next allies himself again with his prophet-brethren (see Isa. xl. 10, and lxii. 11). The word for “reward” is “hire,” or “wages,” recalling the parable of

the labourers in the vineyard. It may be used in a bad sense, as it is in the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus and the "Antigone" of Sophocles, and in that case would refer to the previous verse; but it is more generally used in a good one, and thus is meant to encourage not only those who have borne the burden and heat of the day, but all, in every age, who have really worked for Christ. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." All that they have gone through is more than amply made up to them, and, in the highest and fullest sense, "the rest of the labouring man is sweet." Notice that "work" is in the singular number, as it often is in the Bible, the life of a man being viewed as a whole, which is indeed a great comfort.

Very appropriately is there next introduced the statement, made twice in the opening chapter, and once afterwards in chapter xxi. 6, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (see Isa. again, xli. 4, and xliii. 10). With God there is no beginning nor ending. God, in Christ's revelation, embraces all that we connect with such ideas. As a lovely bracelet may meet together in a clasp set under the most precious jewel of all, so the Books of Genesis and the Apocalypse meet in the pearl of great price, embracing every prophecy and promise which lie between them.

The next verse bears out again, very interestingly, the theory of this being a summary. The Greek for the expressions "do His commandments," and "wash their robes," is very similar in the appearance of the letters.¹ The Revised Version has adopted the latter, thus taking us back to ch. vii. 14. *Now*, in the course of their life's work, they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Then, in the one place, they are shown to us as "before the Throne of God, serving Him day and night in His Temple; and He who sitteth on the Throne spreading His Tabernacle over them;" and here, in the other, the washing and making white—in the same blessed way—gives them the God-bestowed right of entry into the city, and of free partaking of the formerly barred tree of life. It would at first seem as though the order should have

¹ οἱ ποιοῦντες τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ.
οἱ πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν.

been reversed, and the entering in by the gates into the city placed first; but I think it is in the mind of St. John quite naturally. He is first thinking of the burgesses of the city, and then of the "nations" outside, though all alike have, through Jesus Christ, free and open access to the blessed tree. "Without"—the summary is still going on—are, as in ch. xxi. 8, the finally impenitent, for the "without" is the "lake of fire, which is the second death." The only point which seems to need further explanation is the expression "dogs." The dog with us is such a dear creature, the very emblem of faithfulness and affection, that it is hard to imagine him, feeding on offal and carrion, appearing as the embodiment of filthiness, impurity, and unbridled wildness, such as he seems here to be represented. The dog of eastern countries is, even to-day, a very different animal to the one we are familiar with, and, by the Jews, he was held in abhorrence. "Dogs have compassed me;" "Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog;" "Beware of dogs," are all familiar quotations.

Then we have the stamping of the Book as Divine, in the very name of Jesus Himself. He speaks, but it is still through His Apostle. The Revelation, at the very commencement, is declared to be "the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him." Jesus now, as it were, puts His own sign-manual to it, pledging Himself to the testimony alike as David's Lord, and David's offspring; Lord as God, and offspring as man, the Mediator of the everlasting covenant, even "the sure mercies of David." It is well worth noticing here that St. Paul, in his sermon at Antioch, connects this expression, "the sure mercies of David," with the *Resurrection* of Christ. The same Jesus, "the Root and the Offspring of David," is—for we must omit the conjunction—"the Bright, the Morning Star." The gift of "the Morning Star" is promised in ch. iii., to "him that overcometh," and "keepeth His works to the end;" and so the symbol is very appropriately repeated here when the reward for work is to be given. The Morning Star is Jesus Himself; it is an emblem of Royalty (see Numb. xxiv. 17); to us it is the pledge that the morning of our full redemption is about to dawn. The following passage from St. Peter's Second Epistle is very helpful, as being connected closely

both with prophecy and with the majesty of Jesus as King. "We have the word of prophecy made more sure ; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the Day-star arise in your hearts."¹ It has already arisen in *our* hearts, giving us many a joyful foretaste of the perfect day ; it is the bright light of grace, heralding the approach of the endless day of glory.

The one supreme thought, object, and aim of this revelation is to show that the basis of faith, hope, and love, is Jesus and Jesus only. The revelation itself rests upon Him, and all our hope, from the first dawn of awakening grace, to the full light of His own glory, centres in Him, emanates from Him, flows back to Him. We begin to understand, as we see the end and purpose of God's dealings, how St. Paul could say, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake." May we not very humbly take up another of his wonderful utterances, and say, "We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope ; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" ? May all that He has in store for us, the ultimate triumph and glory of the *right*, and the final conquest of all sin, make us range ourselves more faithfully than ever on the side of God ; and while actively working, passively enduring, and patiently testifying in every experience for Christ, support ourselves with this triumphant thought, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen : for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal !"

For the sake of easy reference, I append in tabular form my suggestion that—

Verse 6, part 1,	is a recapitulation of	xix. 9 and xxi. 5.
„ 6, part 2,	„ „	i. 1, and xix. 10.
„ 7, part 1,	„ „	iii. 11.
„ 7, part 2,	„ „	i. 3.
Verses 8 and 9 are	„ „	xix. 10.

¹ 2 St. Pet. i. 19.

Verse 10	is a recapitulation of i. 11, 19.		
„ 11	„	„	xxi. 8.
„ 12	„	„	xiv. 13.
„ 13	„	„	i. 8, 11, and xxi. 6.
„ 14	„	„	ii. 7, and vii. 14.
„ 15	„	„	xxi. 8.
„ 16	„	„	i. 1, and v. 5.
„ 17 (a)	„	„	xxi. 2, 3.
„ 17 (b)	„	„	ii. 7, 11, etc.
„ 17 (c)	„	„	xxi. 6.
Verses 18-20 are	„	„	i. 1-3.

INSTRUCTION LII.

CHAPTER xxii. 17 TO END.

* Is. 55. 1.	17 And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. *And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.	17 ¹ And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely.	¹ Or, Both.
* Deut. 4. 2. Prov. 30. 6.	18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, *If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.	18 I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add ² unto them, God shall add ² unto him the plagues which are written in this book:	² Gr. upon.
	19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.	19 and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, ³ which are written in this book.	³ Or, even from the things which are written.
	20 He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely, I come quickly. Amen. Even so, Come Lord Jesus.	20 He which testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus.	⁴ Some ancient authorities add Christ.
	21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.	21 The grace of the Lord Jesus ⁴ be ⁵ with the saints. Amen.	⁵ Two ancient authorities read with all.

THE concluding sentences in this grand Book seem to me to emphasize very strongly the views expressed in our last Instruction. The eloquent and touching invitation, growing in comprehensiveness till it seems impossible that any one should refuse it, is marked clearly by two features—

(1) It is a *present* appeal in this *present* day of grace and opportunity; and it is thus

(2) A powerful enforcement of the teaching which is behind the solemn utterances of verse 11. Some take the utterance “come” to be the response on behalf of the Church, quickened by the Holy Spirit, to the Lord’s

announcement of His coming ; but I myself think that it is the enlargement of the announcement, "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify unto you these things *in the Churches.*" He had said to His disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." Ever since the fulfilment of that promise, at Pentecost, God the Holy Spirit has been energizing "the Church, which is Christ's body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." It is here, as the bride, represented to us as bearing its testimony to Jesus, in the power of the Holy Ghost, and issuing His invitation to all : "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.'" He that hath an ear, and has heard what the Spirit saith unto the Churches, is now, having heard it himself, to hand the blessed message on to others. Let the Spirit-inspired Church and all her members make clear to the ends of the earth that if any one is "athirst," *i.e.* yearns and longs for better things ; or if any one—though as yet these longings are not clearly defined—is even willing, he is the one to whom the invitation is sent. It is a grandly graduated scale of mercy : "Let him take of the water of life freely (gratuitously)—'Ho ! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.'" We must all feel deeply grateful for such a seal of the Holy Spirit upon our hopes, for it might have been that the Holy Spirit, wearied with our ingratitude and coldness, had left us at last hopelessly to ourselves. Instead of that, as though it were essential to the completeness of the undivided and ever blessed Trinity, the Holy Ghost takes up the same loving invitation that has long ago been given, and "sets to His seal that God is true."

God the *Father* had said to His ancient people, "Wash you, make you clean ; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes ; cease to do evil ; learn to do well ; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow ;" and, when by so doing they had proved their repentance to be sincere and true, He had said, "Come *now*, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

God the *Son* had said, in close, though very seldom noticed, connection with His revelation of the Father,

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Now, God the *Holy Spirit* uses similar language in connection with *His* revelation alike of the Father and the Son: "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.'"

We need make no difficulty about the "testifying" by the Lord Jesus Himself, in verse 20, and the "I testify" of St. John in verse 18. St. John, taught by the Holy Spirit, receives the testimony of Jesus, and hands it on. The three verses 18-20 are an almost exact reproduction of ch. i. 1-3. Notice, as important, the omission of the conjunction "for."

St. John, as a faithful commissioner, warns all, that as a blessing is attached to the reading and hearing of the Book, so are penalties attached either to addition to, or subtraction from, the words of its prophecy. A similar warning is found in the Old Testament, in Deut. iv. 2, and in other places; and in the New Testament, in Gal. i. 8, 9. Archdeacon Lee's explanation is so helpful, that I venture to insert it. "For the references to the Book itself, the first six trumpets (chs. viii. 7, ix. 21) may be noted; the seven thunders (ch. x. 3); the seven vials (ch. xv. 1-17); the earthquake (chs. xi. 13, xvi. 18); the fall of Babylon (ch. xviii). Of course the penalties on additions and omissions are denounced against those who would, as Hengstenberg notes, assail the proper kernel of the Book; such as would substitute for the *narrow* way presented in it, a *broad* one; or would, in any measure, extinguish the light of hope that shines in it for Christians." The Book must stand as a whole; we are not to diminish the solemnity of its warnings, and not to take away one iota of its encouragements. In these Instructions I both hope and believe that we have been mercifully delivered from doing either the one or the other. We have not for one moment minimized sin, or attempted to hide the fact that, so long as it is persisted in, it means separation from God, which is synonymous with death; and I feel sure that we have not intentionally shut out one ray of light and hope, or withheld a word of encouragement from those who feel the strength of temptation, the length of the journey, or the great need of patience in what may seem to them the long delay in the fulfilment of the promises. On the contrary, we have said, and still say, to all, "Keep on bravely and faithfully;" we *all* "have need of patience,

that, having done the will of God, we may receive the promise. For yet a very little while, He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry. But my righteous one shall live by faith: and if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him.”¹

We should notice that the expression in the Received Version, “Take away his part out of the Book of Life,” is, in the Revised Version, “Take away his part from the Tree of Life, and out of the Holy City, which are written in this Book,” where the omission of the conjunction “and” is most important; thus we have again clearly indicated exclusion from the two great blessings to which the close of the Book introduces us.

Besides, we must remember that this passage emphasizes strongly the need of holding fast “*the faith* once for all delivered to the saints.” It appeals to Churchmen to endeavour to recall those who have separated from the Church. I would affectionately appeal to all who have thus separated to consider her claims; to study the Book of Common Prayer and compare it with Holy Scripture, that they may see how absolutely, from one end to the other, it coincides with the Bible; to ask themselves whether their opposition to, or separation from, the Church is the result of prejudice, politics, or party; or whether it arises from a *bonâ fide* belief in the falsity of her doctrines? In the latter case I would beg them not to be afraid of asking for explanations, considering the grave and mischievous results which inevitably arise from such separation. “The Bereans were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they . . . searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” The Church is wide enough in her sympathies to embrace all, and that must be indeed a grave error, and one, moreover, *proved* up to the hilt, which can, in God’s sight, justify departure, or lead men to run counter to their Saviour’s High-Priestly prayer, “that they all may be one.” Though it is true, as has been quaintly said, that the physiognomies of those who are born again are as various as those of the natural man, yet there must be, as God is the God of Truth, a *standard* of essential truths, which it is alike dangerous and sinful either to add to or to subtract from: there is “*one Lord, one faith, one baptism.*”

May I next, in sincere love, warn all against the danger

¹ Heb. x. 36-38 (R.V.).

which is already upon us, of mistaken Catholicism? Eliminating many whose bitter hostility to the Church is too patent to be denied, there are, I rejoice to know, thousands outside her pale who deplore, as I do, the miserable divisions which separate Christians, and who are as anxious as I am to repair the breach. But the remedy that some are suggesting to-day is a mistaken one; it is practically a confused mixture of anything and everything, anybody and everybody, to form a "new Catholicism." The intention is so excellent that one cannot but love those who propound it from religious motives; but the underlying danger is so specious that it is impossible for a faithful man to hold his tongue. I have culled at haphazard, two quotations, one from a daily paper, and the other from the report of a society, which are similar in character to those which are constantly appearing, and which will illustrate the danger to which I refer.

(1) "Union in work, philanthropic and Christian, has always been a difficulty in ——— To Miss ——— we owe the formation of our Ladies' Association on a *broadly Catholic basis*" (the italics are my own), "for its original committee consisted of ladies, members of many different denominations, Church of England, Presbyterian, Unitarian, and Independent."

(2) "The Rev. ——— said the society was undenominational; they had bishops for their patrons, but the majority of their subscribers were Nonconformists. They only preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and they left the converts absolutely to their own discretion, either to join the Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Wesleyans, Primitive Methodists, or whatever Church they liked. They simply desired to bring them to Jesus."

There is a *bonâ fide* desire in both these instances to draw Christians together, with which we must all sympathize, but it is clearly a mistaken "Catholicism." There can be no Church, and no handing down of the living truths of Jesus without settled doctrine. Can it possibly be, even in the mind of him who has the very shallowest notions of the importance of sound doctrine, a matter of *unimportance* whether men hold the divinity of Jesus Christ or *not*? The validity of apostolic orders or *not*? The general necessity of the two great sacraments or *not*? The personality of God the Holy Ghost, or *not*? The atonement

of our Lord Jesus Christ, or *not*? and so to attempt to gather these ayes and noes into one conglomerate mass under the name of a broad Catholicism? Can this be the "one Catholic and apostolic Church"? Truth *as a whole* is too precious a thing to be sacrificed, even in the sacred names of unity and charity. It is only because I believe that this "new Catholicism" must issue in the growing infidelity of the rising generations, that I have felt obliged to enter my protest against it. I hope I have not in a single instance transgressed the boundary line of love. St. John, who was the apostle of love, was also emphatically the apostle of the truth.

In verse 20, it is clear that the speaker is the Lord Jesus Himself, sealing the testimony to which His servant has now borne record (see ch. i. 2). St. John is very fond of the word which is variously translated "record," "witness," "testimony." In the fifth chapter of his First Epistle it occurs no less than ten times in five verses. Jesus now sets His seal to the whole Book that it is true. The assurance, "Yea, I come quickly," is once more repeated, to cheer and encourage us through the apparently long delay.

"The distant landscape draws not nigh
For all our gazing, but the soul
That upward looks, may still descry
Nearer each day the brightening goal."

KEBLE.

Remember that St. John himself had reached an extremely advanced age, and the coming of the Lord must have been to him an occasion for which his whole soul yearned with an intense longing. He may, with some reason, have expected it before his own departure, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" But the response is not his alone, it is that of the whole Church also. "Amen, so be it; come Lord Jesus." There can surely be no other answer from those who believe that His coming will "finish transgression, and make an end of sin." May we, with all our hearts, be able to echo it, and may those hearts themselves be daily more and more prepared by grace for an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Remember that the "hope of glory" must never be dissociated from the "means of grace," for both of which we bless God in the General Thanksgiving. It is only by grace that we can be numbered

with His saints in glory everlasting. So the appropriate concluding words are a benediction of grace ; and, as the Book has been emphatically for the encouragement of the saints in patience and faith throughout their long experience of trial and temptation, so the benediction is emphatically for them : “ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints,” with all those who now in heart and will, and hereafter in absolute fact, are separate from sin. “ Amen.”

One by one our faithful dear ones are being summoned from the Church militant here on earth, to the blessedness of Paradise ; soon our own time will come ; meanwhile, we are all alike waiting for the fulfilment of the Revelation, the complete *unveiling* of the designs of God, the completion of “ the number of His elect, and the hastening of His Kingdom.” Be watchful, for here is another and final parallel with the discourse on the four last things—“ Watch, therefore ; for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh. . . . Be ye also ready : for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath set over His household, to give them their food in due season ? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that He will set him over all that He hath.”

“ Take ye heed, watch and pray : for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore : for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning ; lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, WATCH.”

May God, in His grace and mercy, pardon all that He sees amiss in these Instructions, and so bless all that is agreeable to His will, and in accordance with His truth, that before our earnest hearts and longing eyes there may henceforth be, clear and well-grounded, the hope of that eternal home so beautifully portrayed by St. Bernard :—

“ The home of fadeless splendour,
Of flowers that bear no thorn,
Where they shall dwell as children
Who now as exiles mourn,

“Midst power that knows no limit,
And wisdom free from bound,
The beatific vision
Shall glad the saints around :

“The peace of all the faithful,
The calm of all the blest,
Inviolable unvaried,
Divinest, sweetest, best.

“Yes, peace ! for war is needless,
Yes, calm ! for storm is past,
And goal from finished labour,
And anchorage at last ! ”

“Who shall speak the rapture when the circle is complete,
And all the children, sundered now, before their Father meet ?
One fold, one Shepherd, one employ, one everlasting home.
Lo ! I come quickly. ‘Even so. Amen. Lord Jesus, come.’ ”¹

“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely, I come
quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus. The grace
of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen ! ”

¹ Bishop of Exeter's “Water from the Well Spring.”

THE END.

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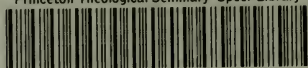
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